A MEMORIAL

OF THE

LIFE, CHARACTER, AND DEATH

OF

REV. BENJAMIN F. HOSFORD.

"How pure at heart, and sound in head, —
With what divine affections bold,
Should be the man whose thought would hold
An hour's communion with the dead."

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PREFACE.

It is perhaps due to all concerned to say, that the single object of the writer has been, to present to Mr. Hosford's own intimate friends a picture of the man, the Christian, and the minister, just as they knew him, especially in his more retired walks. And, while he is well aware that a cold and severe taste might find in such a memorial of such a man matter for criticism, he will be satisfied if they who knew, and appreciated, and loved the man, do but see him reflected in the unstudied and unfettered freedom of his own quiet and beautiful daily life. It has often been by no means easy to decide just what selection, from the mass of materials at hand, would best aid in furnishing this portrait, and it is more than probable that in respect to this there have been some errors in judgment. It is proper to add, that the poetic extracts, so freely introduced, are known to have been, to a great extent, specially dear to Mr. Hosford, and have been introduced mainly because they are so

tenderly associated with him in the minds of his most intimate friends, and now so touchingly expressive of their recollections of some trait in his character, some phase in his experience, or some scene in his life or death.

With many thanks to those — especially to *one* most deeply and tenderly interested — who have aided and cheered him in his labor, the Editor, in laying down his pen, can only say, that, both for the dear departed brother's sake, and for his Master's sake, he would most gladly, were he able, lay upon his tomb a more worthy garland.

. . . . "Manibus date lilia plenis;
Purpureos spargam flores . . . . .
. . . . . et fungar inani
Munere."

L. T.

West Amesbury, *March* 24, 1866.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

PAGE

His Childhood and Childhood's Home 1

CHAPTER II.

The Pastor 23

CHAPTER III.

The Pastor, Continued 53

CHAPTER IV.

Mr. Hosford in the Pulpit 70

CHAPTER V.

Love of Science 83

CHAPTER VI.

Love of Nature 87

CHAPTER VII.

Love of Music 101

CHAPTER VIII.

Love of Country 107

CHAPTER IX.

Love of Satire 115

CHAPTER X.

PAGE

Mr. Hosford as a Friend 131

CHAPTER XI.

His Love of Home 145

CHAPTER XII.

The Bereaved Father 156

CHAPTER XIII.

Pursuit of Health 174

CHAPTER XIV.

Waning Hopes 183

CHAPTER XV.

Dismission 202

CHAPTER XVI.

"Breaking Up" 206

CHAPTER XVII.

Last Days 217

CHAPTER XVIII.

Funeral Services 237

CHAPTER XIX.

The Sleeping Place 240

CHAPTER XX.

Letters of Condolence 243

MEMORIAL.

CHAPTER I.

MR. HOSFORD'S CHILDHOOD, AND CHILDHOOD'S HOME.

"Our cradle is the starting-place
In life; we run the onward race
And reach the goal,
When, in the mansions of the blest,
Death leads to its eternal rest
The weary soul."

ANON.

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN HOSFORD was born in Thetford, Vt., November 11, 1817. He was the son of Joseph and Abigail (Bartholomew) Hosford, and the youngest of twelve children. Baptized in infancy by "good old Dr. Burton," whose praise was in all the churches, he was trained by his parents as a child of the covenant, and was early impressed with a sense of his sinfulness and his need of a saving interest in Christ. Unfortunately, but few of the incidents of his childhood can now be recalled in a form which permits their introduction here. But the emphatic testimony of all who knew him is, that his early life was one of rare exemption from the common foibles of youth, and of amiableness, cheerfulness, and seriousness, blended in a char-

acter of remarkable maturity and symmetry. It was his own cherished intention, during the last years of his life, to write out for his children a sketch of the prominent incidents of his boyhood. Failing strength, however, put the execution of this plan out of his power. Yet often and earnestly did he express his gratitude to God, that he was preserved from the vices into which he saw so many boys continually falling. "Oh, that these boys knew the simplicity and innocence of my early mountain home!" was often the expressed sigh of his heart, as he witnessed the rush of young people around him into scenes and associations likely to be a life-long injury to them.

But, while he was ever grateful that he had been kept from the common vices and mistakes of youth, he bitterly recalled, as he looked back from manhood, some acts, which, however they may have failed to attract the notice of others, he deeply regretted to the day of his death. One of these painful reminiscences is best given in his own simple but touching words. In a communication addressed to children, he says, —

"I will tell you about Frank H——. He is now a man; but when he was a little boy, it used to be his part of the work to bring in the wood at night, after he had come home from school. He then had three sisters, all older than himself. One of them, whom at that time he loved more than the others, after having been married about a year came home again, sick with consumption. She had a room by herself, and, as it was December, she needed a fire also. You would

suppose, would you not, that Frank would have been very happy to keep a good fire all the time for the sister he loved so much? But this increased his work, and though the wood was all cut and piled in a shed near the door, still he began to be tired of bringing it in night after night for so long a time, especially as it did not seem to make his sister any better. It kept him from sliding, or skating, or playing with other boys, or from his books; so after a while he did not go up to her bed-side, as he used to do, after laying down his wood, to take her by her hand, which was thin and pale and cold, asking her if she wanted him to do anything more which could make her happy.

"One night, when he was more fretful than usual, he threw down his wood carelessly, making a great deal of noise; and as he went out of the room with a heavy step, muttering to himself some sullen words, his mother observed he was out of patience, and said to him with a low voice, 'You won't have to bring in wood much longer for poor Lucy!'

"On the next Sabbath evening I was called into the room to see her die; (and here I will confess that *I* was that same unkind, impatient Frank.) She was lying on the sofa, her head being supported by her older sister. Her eyes looked very glassy — I never had seen eyes look so. Her nostrils expanded every time she breathed, and being very faint, my mother was fanning her violently; but it was all in vain! She breathed shorter and shorter, her eyes gradually closed, and, as if dropping to sleep, she sunk back into her

sister's arms — dead! Her gentle spirit had left us forever! It was the first time I had ever seen one die, and I wept aloud.

"Lucy was a very kind and gentle sister to me, and when one of the neighbors who had come in, told me I never should see her again, I wept more bitterly still. I wept every day till she was buried, — when the neighbors came in to see the corpse; when my brother measured her for a coffin; when the minister talked to us at the funeral; when she was let down into the grave, which was dug for her in the garden; and never did I weep more than on the evening of the next Sabbath, when the family all sat silent around the fire, — *not all*, for Lucy was not there!

"I grieved much at the loss of so good a sister as she was to me. But *one thing* grieved me more than all else; and what do you think it was? It was the remembrance of my impatience and fretfulness when I threw down the wood, muttering; and of my mother's sorrowful words, — '*You won't have to bring in wood much longer for poor Lucy!*' These words were now like burning coals in my bosom. I could not banish them from my mind. I thought of them all day long, and then they haunted me in my dreams. Oh, how I cried that I might see her once more! Yes, though she was cold, and could not hear one word, nor tell me that she forgave me, yet I wished to whisper in her ear how sorry I was, and that I did not think of what I was saying, and did n't mean to grieve her, and now wished her to forgive me, and love me again as she used to do.

"It is now seventeen years since that happened, and yet it is as fresh in memory as anything that happened yesterday. That one act has cost me more sorrow than any other act of my life. It seems as if God punished me every day for it; for every day I think of it, and it makes me unhappy.

"I hope my sister forgave me at the time, and I hope too that God has forgiven me, for I now think it was a very great sin, and I have often asked him to forgive me."

When the "Frank" of the preceding story was about twelve years of age, there occurred an incident which deeply moved his heart in a different way, and one to which, years afterward, he was accustomed to look back as the turning-point in his moral probation. The following account of it, from his own pen, was written in 1850: —

"Having been sent on an errand, early one morning, to a neighbor's house, I arrived there just as the father was preparing for family worship. Instead of asking my errand and then sending me back as soon as might be, Mrs. H—— invited me to take off my cap and wait till after prayer. I consented more willingly than she suspected; for I had great confidence in the piety of both, and somehow hoped that good would come to me from being with them in so sacred a service as their family devotions. Mr. H—— had a peculiarly thoughtful, deliberate, and earnest manner in prayer. I could perfectly understand every petition, and I felt sure it was a sincere petition. During all the prayer,

I stood in one corner of the kitchen, leaning against the wall, with my face hid in my cap. I do not now recollect that there was any special allusion to me in the prayer ; but he who prayed for us seemed to be so near to God, and to unfold his goodness to me in such a light ; there was such a reality about it that, altogether, it was more than heart could endure. I wept in penitence and grief. I prayed, if ever I prayed ; and if ever I was heard, it was in that unspoken cry for mercy. I was too young to know whether I was a Christian or not ; indeed, I did not think I was for some years afterward ; I only knew that I felt toward my Saviour as I had never felt before. But as I now look upon the event, and as I have looked upon it for years, it seems to me clearly to have been the turning-point in my probation, the *eventful moment* to me. For years I have regarded it as the occasion of my happiness as a Christian, and of whatever success I may have had in my ministry."

At what time Mr. Hosford first had evidence that satisfied his own mind that he had experienced the "great change," there are now no certain means of determining. He did not make a public profession of religion till more than six years after the eventful prayer which so deeply affected him. While he was a member of Dartmouth College, and in the nineteenth year of his age, he united with the Congregational Church at Hanover, N. H. When asked to give some account of his religious experience, he replied, "I grew up into piety by baptism, religious training, and the grace of God."

Mr. Hosford never ceased, through his whole earthly sojourn, to bless God for the circumstances in which his early life was spent, for the Christian parents who instructed him in the faith of the Gospel, and for the rich rural scenery that so largely contributed to the happiness of his youth. His frequent visits to "*the dear spot*" among the hills of Vermont, and his many allusions to it in his letters, evince an undying and undecaying enthusiasm, remarkable even in a nature so childlike in its attachments.

In 1849 he wrote: "Pleasant news to-day from my childhood's home, to which place my attachment seems strong and sacred as ever. No place do I so long to see at all seasons as that home. None floats so constantly before my vision, and to no place am I indebted for so many pleasant memories and delightful associations, as to that; and I grieve to think how different, in all probability, will be the circumstances under which any child of mine will grow up, from those of my own youth.

"I feel as if the whole warp of my soul's fabric would be taken out, were I to lose the remembrances and influences of a virtuous, industrious, peaceful home among the ever-varying scenery of the country.

"Now how different must be the structure of a mind and heart fashioned and developed in a hired house, in the changing community of a village or large town, in a monotonous and undulating country, which, as I look upon it, makes me feel something as I do upon the deck of a smoothly rolling vessel.

"Were not Providence somewhat concerned in placing me here, I should feel like asking for a location where duty would be consistent with delight, and usefulness in my calling be cheered by a daily luxuriating amid the beauties and still more beautiful associations of a mountain home. Aside from the joys of true conversion to Christ, I could ask no richer inheritance for a child than such a constant remembrance as I now have of my childhood and youth at home."

In the spring of 1849, he writes from North Thetford: "The enjoyment of this visit is indeed unusually intense, by the thought that my health may be giving way, and I looking on all these scenes for the last time; nor will I deny that a hope in Christ gives me more quietness and peace in anticipation of such an event, than I have ever had before.

"Living amid these scenes is a luxury. . . . What joy a meditative saunter among them imparts. All thanks to the God of my childhood through a pious father who early gave me up in baptism, that while many things remind me of youthful follies and sins, I recall no gross transgressions or vices, whose every thought would sicken."

At Haverhill: "What few thoughts and feelings I ever had which gave me much pleasure, are such as could not exist or arise except in solitude. It would seem as if the tastes I formed in early life among the mountains of Vermont would never be outgrown."

"Sept. 30, 1849. Walked over the scenes of earliest childhood, and was sadly happy. The old road,

now a cultivated field, in which the front yard is also lost, — the old house now long without a tenant, partitions torn down, glass broken and windows boarded up, doors nailed, cupboards empty, with here and there a relic so significant of an experience altogether forgotten; I walked through and through its rooms, and lived over my childhood again, except that the thoughtfulness of manhood gave it a deeper tinge. In one room, mother tells me all her twelve children were born; and in that same room my two sisters died since my remembrance. This latter fact affected me most. One of the most potent as well as most sacred influences under which I live, is the remembrance of departed kindred and friends, among whom none are more vivid in my recollection than these two sisters; the one amiable and quiet as the flower at sunset, the other earnest, conscientious, and energetic, as sterling Christian principle must ever be."

"Nov. 30, 1850. In Wordsworth's 'Prelude,' noticed his frequent mention of the scenery of his childhood, and its happy effect upon his mind. I feel it all myself, and thank anew the Providence that ordered my lines to fall to me in such a place as my native home."

Years later, he writes of the changes in his childhood's home thus: "The fields still smile, never more lovingly, but the hands that once tilled them are dust. The brook still murmurs its sweet soothing music across the farm, but the more musical voices of those who used to play with him [me] along its willowy

banks or among its smooth pebbles are silent forever. Under the same shady trees where he and his schoolmates played, and around the same cool spring where he and they knelt to drink, other merry children now drink and sing, who perhaps never heard the name of the stranger who stands weeping at the sight. That graceful wavy line of hill-tops along the twilight sky,— oh, how familiar it seems; how it annihilates the long and wearisome pilgrimage which he has made since its image was first imprinted on his tender mind." And, thinking himself young again, he adds: "And now for the soft hands I used to press, and the sweet voices I used to drink in, and the moist, deep eyes that used to look on these scenes with me, — show me the way to their home. . . . . But his heart-melting appeal receives no answer save from the numberless snowy fingers, oh, how many of them, standing up from that sacred enclosure across the fields, 'God's Acre,' as piety calls it, where almost the whole generation of his contemporaries are now gathered in silent, peaceful society.

"And on the landscape, as I look, naught do I see unchanged remain, save the rude cliffs and chiming brooks. To me they make a heavy moan of early friendships past and gone."

Such was the boyhood and the boyhood's home, which the boy and the man alike so invariably honored. "Our sweet, green, birdy, flowery, country home." "This sweet summer vale, full of trout and pickerel, and robins and arbutus." "These cool, silent, religious

woods." "The rejoicing country, beautiful and fragrant with flowers, and exulting in sunshine and bird-music, sends greeting to the toiling, sweltering, prosaic city." These, and expressions like these, abound in all the correspondence of his life.

To complete the picture of that loved home, and the fond lover of its delightful scenery and associations, it is fitting that we introduce the words of a beloved sister, written since the lamented brother's death:—

"Our old homestead once gave shelter to grandparents, parents, and eleven children. With its low but ample roof, small windows, and oaken floors, how friendly it looked out to us children as we clattered in at sunset from winter's school, where we spent so many hours of dulness. Soon spring came timidly on; we skip out from the highway to stand on the warm earth beneath the 'Old Pine.' We hear the bleating of flocks. Motherless young lambs call after and follow us. We go back and hug them up once more, and after the days become warm, how they amuse us as they circle around the smooth field in a pretty chain.

"Can one count the bare foot-paths, kept smooth by young feet, that led out from the 'Old Red House'?

"On a smooth, warm slope near the well-curb, we will visit the gosling tribe, in their low, three-cornered pen. Here, so green and gold, they lie sprawled out in the soft sunshine, or dip in and out the clear water. In the sultry summer morning they seek out the path to the cool swamp. What a happy life these gentle creatures led, as they leisurely spat over the

sweet, moist turf. Young feet are waiting to run and bring them up at sunset. Oh! the memory of those lute-like voices! Sweet home! I have but to close my eyes and look out to yonder orchard. There it is, meekly seated among apple and cherry trees, patiently awaiting all comers and goers.

"Low red roses come blushing up under the little windows; cinnamon roses too, the same our grandmother admired, and parcelled out to her little friends. Next to roses we loved the low lilac-bush, whose piercing smell was so refreshing. We thought of the spring morning when it was brought from a kind neighbor's and planted here. See the morning-glories swinging over the great door. Little hands planted and watered these. Now they come suddenly out, wide open, perfect. These must be visited and counted anew each morning. Happy, happy childhood! when one can love things so evanescent.

"Over this orchard the low grass was spotted with daisies and buttercups. Sweeter yet to the memory was the narrow foot-path winding across, and vanishing, at the low fence, into the highway. Over this silent path, each in turn took his course as he launched out into the great world, and by this, all came back, as, at set of day, our parents watched our return. A few bounds brought us to the brook-side, the meadows, overspread with elms and butternuts, whose tall grass was gay with lilies. And now to the bank of the Connecticut.

"Musing by this silent stream we gather shells,

leaving all human anxiety for a future day. Sweet thoughts come gushing up at the name of 'Potato Hill,' its sugar and apple orchards of early time. In the clear, cool morning of spring, we watch the first streak of sunshine along the western hill-tops. Ready and waiting, we string out, following father through woods and over mountain. We then merge into the solitary hill-road. We reach the summit, and sit wearied down before the old log-house with stone chimney, whose light had forever gone out. We feel awed as we tread softly up to the broken door.

"To the north and east a glorious view opens wide before us; and in clear, fine weather, the 'Franconia Hills' shine out like walls of alabaster. A soft, moist field lies before us, and, beyond, the low woods, into which we hastily disappear until sunset. Within these woods the slant rays of sun never enter but in midsummer. Here stood the old wigwam, the open fire and boiling-kettles; and here, sheltered from winds, we loitered out many a pleasant April day.

"Again, while the autumn days are shortening, the slow ox-teams are early seen climbing up the hilly road. Joyous children again string along the path; we walk and ride by turns.

"So many young hands give the work a lively turn. The carts are heaped with the gold, russet, or red fruit; but the sun is already behind the tall pines before the whole train is winding down the rough road. We have not forgotten mother and home, left behind. So we gather up a few sweet herbs, and soon meet her at

the gate. Too tired to lay plans for the morrow, we go silently to rest.

"Dear, indulgent parents! How evenly they seem to have held the balance amid distraction! While seeking to mature the elder children, the cry came, 'Room in thy heart, mother.' True to the last, little Benjamin was welcomed in, pleased with his place and lot. He was from infancy up the most powerful of all in drawing hearts after him; so gentle, so lowly, all can answer who knew him. With this sweet lamb of the flock, our parents proceeded as indulgent grandparents sometimes do; but, happy for him, love guided aright. To him laws were needless, himself a law; so he slid forward year upon year, the same self-poised child, boy, and man. Nothing stirred up the slumbering fire in the old man's heart like a glimpse of the lad as he returned from abroad.

"His first sorrow, when ten years old, could never be wiped out. During this year our two grown sisters obeyed their final summons, and were laid in the front yard under the willow-tree.

"But the grief of his manhood was called out in the fall of an elder brother. The relation between these, though not spoken, was tender and very touching. The elder lived to see his early hopes perfected in the younger, then let slip the golden links, for others he loved to gather up, and crossed over, as we believe, through darkness into light.

"Respecting this elder brother, the younger wrote: 'Oh, the sad recollection of that rare brother! Have

been thinking more and yet more sadly of him since his release, and, for aught I see, shall go on to the end of my life regretting him. This life to him was in part a failure, inasmuch as he had more talent and ambition than most men; yet not a failure at all as regards us younger children. His spirit of enterprise raised the tone of reading and thinking in us children, and early set the wheels of thought in motion. Had his electric powers, so remarkable, been modified and mellowed by religion, he would have surpassed his age.'

"Again I say, dear home of our childhood, how sweet the memory of thy by-paths and solitudes, ever fresh, ever new!

"How primitive to launch out, we cared not whither, across fields and meadows, or down the brook-side, now blue with spring violets, or where honeysuckles hung themselves out on the high warm bank, and the sweet-brier grew up in beauty close to the highway. More than all these, the dear society that beguiled the way-side walk. What a painful want comes back as we revisit these scenes now. Now, reluctant, we move forward; each step draws out a sigh. Our dear one seldom rode, and I can recall no scene in which he shared, without tears for his early fate. Often I seem to sing with him again,—

'Return, O David, return;
E'en the fields and the valleys thy absence do mourn."

"Dear lost one! we stretch out our arms to thee; they come back empty, and we say, 'How is the strong staff broken and the beautiful rod.'"

The following communications from Rev. E. F. Slafter, of the American Bible Society, and Rev. L. Thayer, of Windham, N. H., both townsmen and early friends of Mr. Hosford, will be found appropriate in this chapter: —

Rev. and Dear Sir, — In your note just received, you request me to communicate any reminiscences of the boyhood of my departed friend, and I hasten to comply, so far as I am able, with your request.

My acquaintance with the late Rev. Benjamin Franklin Hosford commenced when we were boys, though at first it was not very intimate. His father's farm was in the northeast part of Thetford, Vermont, while my father's was a mile north of the centre of the same town; and we were five miles apart by the nearest way. We both attended worship at the old Municipal Meeting-house, for so it may be called, as it was the property of the town; and, with the exception of a very small parish on the northwestern boundary, it was the only one from the first settlement of the precinct; and had been held together and sustained against all encroachments for more than fifty years, by the wise but exclusive policy of the celebrated and revered Dr. Burton. Down to the period of our boyhood, the internal arrangements of the old meeting-house were the same as they had been from its first erection. The families were seated by some principle of seniority; the eldest were placed nearest the pulpit, and thus passing off by a sliding scale, leaving the young, quick-eared farmers near the door. The pulpit being the post of honor, was flanked on both sides by the village doctor, the lawyer, and more wealthy merchants, irrespective of age, thus setting aside the controlling principle in the general arrangement, in favor of a wholesome respect for dignitaries. The galleries were devoted to the young men, the young women, and the smaller boys and girls, each sex occupying its respective gallery. A police force of from six to ten tithing-men was conveniently disposed to keep order in this

juvenile assemblage. Under the surveillance of this police, and the profound metaphysics of the astute Doctor, we had little to do except to keep clear of the tithing-men, and study each other's characters. I think I knew every boy in the parish, so far at least as to have formed a very clear idea of the calibre of each, intellectual, moral, and physical. In this way I had known, for several years, young Hosford, my future schoolmate and life-long friend. In 1830 I was placed by my father in a country-store at the centre of the town. Near by, on the Ompompanoosuc River, was a set of flour-mills. To these young Hosford, then perhaps twelve years of age, was sent, as was the custom of farmers' sons, with the "family grist." During his stay he paid me a visit, and our intimate acquaintance fairly commenced. After various themes of juvenile conversation had been disposed of, he inquired with very deep interest, if I had the cent of the date of 1814. I immediately produced the precious coin. He examined it with great care, and at length proposed to purchase it. I had already heard that it contained a quantity of gold, and was not prepared to set a price. It was examined and reëxamined, and finally a "quarter of a dollar" was offered for it. But the examination and the liberal offer both impressed the owner that the coin must be exceedingly valuable, and the glittering "quarter" was reluctantly declined. He turned away with disappointment, leaving the owner in doubt whether he had not lost an opportunity that would not again recur, and the sequel proved that the doubt was well founded. As neither of the parties ever became distinguished bankers, this "gold speculation" was not looked upon as proof that "coming events cast their shadows before," but was often referred to with great merriment in after years, as the beginning of a golden friendship.

Soon after this we became schoolmates in the academy of our native town. There was little incident in the years we were there together, that can be placed on record. His character was not one to develop incident. He was not bold, dashing, or erratic. His nature was of too high a type for this. He pur-

sued patiently the beaten track, but there was a glow of interest and subdued enthusiasm in whatever occupied his mind. The dullest routine of study, when he entered upon it, appeared to change its character as by some magic power; its sombre hues all disappeared; and the rugged path seemed luminous with a bright June sun and fragrant with sweet June flowers. He was two years before me in his course, and I often thought, as I listened while he was reciting his lessons, how easy it would be, and how much I should enjoy my studies, when I should arrive at the same stage. It mattered not whether he was giving the irregular forms of a Greek or Latin verb, demonstrating a proposition in geometry, or performing a problem in algebra, it was always done with such a singular grace and beauty, that it did not seem to be work, but the merest play.

He had a natural taste for æsthetics, — a quick eye and ear for everything beautiful in Nature and Art: his field of observation in the latter was limited, but he revelled at will in the former. He delighted in studying the laws of Nature as he saw them unfolded in the flower, the velvet leaf, the massive tree, the tiny insect, and in all the higher forms of animal life. He was never impatient of solitude. He always came home from a lonely walk with some new food for thought, some fresh theme for conversation.

He was endowed with a sportive humor, with a very keen sense of the ludicrous. He was no mimic; he had very little histrionic skill in its ordinary form, yet his perceptions were so vivid that he often impressed you with his sense of the ludicrous as no actor could. He was never bitter; there was not a particle of gall in his nature. I can never forget the exquisite manner in which he declined the Latin *vox*, after the style of a raw country boy, of a peculiarly deep, guttural voice, who persisted day after day in declining it as a regular noun of the third declension, "*Vox, voxis, voxi, voxem, vox, voxe*," and then followed a convulsive laugh, showing how fully the *faux pas* of the awkward lad had taken possession of him.

During the period anterior to his entering college, to which

this notice solely relates, he had not made any public profession of his religious faith, but his life and conduct, to outward observation, was perfectly blameless. No member of the church was more uniform in the observance of all outward Christian duties, or exhibited more of the spirit of the Master than he did. Amid all the conflicts common to young men in their school days, in our societies and literary clubs, I never saw him in anger; I never knew him to complain of ill usage, or heard him speak unkindly of a fellow-student. I am very confident that among all the young men with whom we were associated, there was not one who openly expressed or secretly entertained an unfriendly sentiment towards him.

As I have already intimated, there was very little incident in his boyhood illustrative of his character, which can be placed upon record.

From my earliest acquaintance with him, there was a gradual, harmonious, and symmetrical development of all the elements of his character, into the strength and maturity of manhood. The child was, in a very eminent degree, the father of the man. Those who only knew him in his riper years, in whose minds his character stands out clear and distinct, have only to diminish the picture, contracting all in just proportion, taking away much of the discipline of his powers, his experience of the world, and the influence of grave studies, and they will have a complete outline of his youth, — serene, gentle, fresh in thought and feeling, loving and beloved.

I have thus given you, my dear sir, as you desired, my impressions of the earlier years, together with certain circumstances that aided in moulding the character of my dear departed friend, whose memory I shall always cherish, and whose virtues I shall always wish to imitate.

I am very faithfully and truly yours,

EDMUND F. SLAFTER.

Boston, July 10, 1865.

Mr. Thayer gives his "early recollections" of his friend, Mr. Hosford, as follows: —

"We were natives of the same town, living some two miles apart. My first acquaintance with him was not gained in the usual manner, by often seeing him and finally speaking, but was sudden and all at once; and yet it was continued while he lived. Before I knew him, I heard of his feats in music on the bass viol; how he would play correctly when so short that he could not equal the height of the instrument without standing in a chair. I first met him on a fourth of July, or other holiday in the summer, when all the people ascended Thetford Hill to attend services in the square-pewed meeting-house, where the eloquent Dr. Charles White held forth, and the old divine, Asa Burton, stood at his elbow in the pulpit, and stared him in the face whenever he uttered a striking passage. This was the distinguished Doctor in Metaphysics, who baptized us both, laying his thin, soft hand upon our consecrated heads. Frank was two years younger than myself, and was at this time under the care of some female friend, while I enjoyed the liberty of roving where I thought fit. We found ourselves in the same pew, in a distant part of the gallery, and had large talk with each other ere we knew what we were about, both before and after the services, and not a little in the midst of them. I can recall no joke, nor pun, that passed between us, but the whole interview was a feast of wit, according to our ideas at the time; he seemed pleased with me, and certainly I was delighted with him. I remember it only as a laughing time, and know not why it stamped itself so indelibly on my memory. The occurrence is as vivid to-day as when it first took place, and the result of it was a friendship as permanent as our lives. I have no clew to our exact ages; I infer they must have been considerably under ten years. It was not long, however, before he came to the academy in our neighborhood, and began to fit for college. I went to his room as an old acquaintance, while, as yet, he was a stranger in the school, though I

had not then commenced my studies. The entertainment which I oftenest enjoyed with him was, some new fact in natural history, or some little experiment in philosophy; one with the light near the window is still freshly retained. No scheme of ambition, nor the least ill-will towards any one was expressed, but the ever-present love of Nature was foremost and last.

"During his college course his religious experience became more decided and manifest, and he united with the church in Hanover, which was one of the first things that revealed his religion to others; for there was no marked conversion in his case, but piety from his youngest days accompanied him, all the way from the cradle to the grave. His scholarship as well as his piety improved during his whole preparatory course, and he stood higher in his class as a Senior than as a Freshman. He was never vicious, but gentle and retiring; he sought to conquer by little surprises, rather than by a bold and strong encounter, and was a general favorite among all classes. His college days were marked by quiet but superior scholarship, and he ranked higher at Andover as a writer, than at Dartmouth as a linguist. I remember that his wit took a more decided development in the theological seminary; and, especially during the last year of his course, he was known among the students as the writer of keen hits and sharp points. I have in mind the style of his anniversary piece. Professor B. B. Edwards, sitting upon the platform, listened very attentively through the whole, and when he came to a sharp saying, he would slowly turn his eyes upon the audience with his significant smile, as much as to say, 'He has hit them now.'

"His wit was the more pleasant as it was most natural, and chimed in with the studies and teachings of Nature. This acquaintance with natural objects and associations, and love of Nature herself, was a family, as well as individual, trait. The family was known of others as lovers of natural scenery, and delighting in wild haunts, and in hunting as a pastime, if not a passion.

"Another item in Mr. Hosford's home-culture of the studies

of Nature, was the family custom of 'sugaring off' in the open forests; not that they alone made sugar from the hard or rock maple, but that they connected with it social tendencies, which formed a kind of education. The teachers of the academy were sent for, and friends from a distance were invited, and a social festivity or celebration was enjoyed, that was elevating in its character, and not merely satisfactory to the appetite. A musical instrument could easily be added at any time, which made the occasion more than ordinarily choice and select. It was in part owing to such influences, that Mr. Hosford expressed that fine shade of meaning so common in his performances, whether literary or religious, and which formed one of their principal attractions.

"These incidents and tendencies of his early life have been hastily, though not carelessly, gathered up by his life-long friend, LOREN THAYER."

"*Windham, N. H., November* 8, 1865."

Such was the child; and it is believed that those who follow him through the scenes and labors of his subsequent life, will see truth as well as beauty in the lines, —

"The child 's included in *the man*,
And part of him forever ;
The Past still in the Future lives,
And basis to its being gives,
Not it, but of it ever."

CHAPTER II.

THE PASTOR.

"We should count time by heart-throbs. He most lives
Who thinks most, feels the noblest, acts the best."

. . . . . .

"There are, in this loud, stunning tide
Of human care and crime,
With whom the melodies abide
Of the everlasting chime;
Who carry music in their heart
Through dusky lane and wrangling mart,
Plying their daily task with busier feet,
Because their secret souls a holy strain repeat."

KEBLE.

Of Mr. Hosford's life in college, we can only say, in addition to what has been said by his early friend, that, having pursued his preparatory studies in Thetford Academy, he entered Dartmouth College, at Hanover, N. H., in the autumn of 1834, and graduated there in 1838.

He immediately entered the Theological Seminary at Andover, where he graduated in 1841, having been "approbated" by the Andover Association, April 13, of that year.

He was accustomed to speak of his associations with Andover and Andover friends as very delightful. And those who knew him there have the most vivid

recollections of his sparkling wit, his warm friendship, his refined tastes, and his earnest and consistent piety. Some of the dearest attachments of his life were formed on that sacred "Hill," which so many ministers of the gospel love to look back upon as the most sacred spot, save one, known to their earthly experience.

After leaving the seminary, Mr. Hosford spent between three and four years in supplying vacant pulpits, in various places. With quite too much modesty, self-respect, and real ability to push himself into notoriety, and too much principle and piety to make a display of his powers and his "*great sermons*," in order to excite the admiration of the congregations before which he stood as God's ambassador, he had, humanly speaking, but a feeble prospect of a settlement at all befitting his qualifications. Many a reader, without knowing the writer, relished and still remembers the keen, yet truly Christian articles, which, during the last year of his unsettled life as a preacher, he furnished for the "Boston Recorder." The articles were entitled, "The Unsettled Minister to his Brethren"; "A Dream of an Unsettled Minister," and "Hints to Destitute Churches, by an Unsettled Minister," over the signatures respectively of "Luke," "Joseph," and "Mark." They would all be articles for the "times," if republished in 1866.

But the longest night is succeeded by morning. Mr. Hosford at length found his place. Having accepted a call to become the pastor of the Centre Church, Haverhill, Mass., he was ordained May 21, 1845.

He used, in subsequent years, to speak of this event as very strange. The people had heard other candidates whom they were not inclined to call, and he had preached to other congregations who were not inclined to call him, and over whom he did not desire to be settled; but, in this case, the interest was mutual on the very first day, if not the first half day, of his preaching. The people felt that he was the minister for them; the minister felt that they were the people for him. In Mr. Hosford's own expressive words addressed to the council that dismissed him, after being in the pastoral office more than eighteen years, "*the preacher and the people were mutually smitten at first sight.*"

Having been married, July 28, 1845, to Miss Mary Elizabeth Stone, daughter of Luther and Mary Eaton Stone, of Saxonville, Mass., Mr. Hosford was at length fully introduced to the great work of his life. With what views and feelings he met the calls and responsibilities of this work, the following pages will show.

Passing his records of experience during the first three years or more of his pastoral life, as suggesting nothing of special importance, we find him writing —

Jan. 10, 1849. "This day attended upon, and participated in the exercises of dedication of a new church in Bradford. Mind was less absorbed in the services than in thoughts concerning the utter inadequacy of all church architecture, and music, and stately services, to realize our idea of God! After all these efforts how far short do we fall of the Great Incom-

prehensible! 'Where is the house which ye build unto me, and where is the place of my rest?'

"But while all such efforts reveal the distance and the greatness of Jehovah, so far beyond and above them all, they are still of great value in awakening juster apprehensions of Him, and stronger yearnings of soul for a still higher and better knowledge of Him. We leave the edifying stateliness of such services with more than a Job's anxiety, 'O that I knew where I might find *Him!*'

"Jan. 11. This evening is my weekly conference. I tried to carry out the idea of yesterday, taking the last chapter of Isaiah for the theme, especially the first and second verses. Dwelt on the idea that true humility springs from just views of God's greatness and glory. Hence God dwells in the soul of the humble and contrite, because that state of soul presupposes honorable views entertained of Him. God blesses the humble, not merely because of their humility, but rather because of those views of Him which *begat* humility.

"Jan. 13, Saturday eve. Another week gone! Another Sabbath with its labors near! These working-days, marking off my fleeting existence, — how fast they succeed each other! May it not be in vain that they come so frequent to remind me of the necessity of doing life's work while it is called To-day. I sometimes detect myself longing for those peaceful, careless Saturday nights, that bring to the cotter the promise of rest from labor and anxiety, — experience so opposite

to that of the minister; but I strive to banish the wish, (so soon as I become conscious of it,) for two reasons: First, it may savor of discontent with what I acknowledge to be an assignment of Providence; and, second, lest Heaven grant my wish by deposing me, through sickness or otherwise, from the honor of active labor and toil in this ministry,—a thing which I truly deprecate. Better than all, that I be diligent and cheerful in my present place, and, at the same time, willing to leave the whole disposal of the future with God.

"Finished an unfinished sermon to-day on 'One thing thou lackest,' itself lacking one thing at least, namely, unction, Christian spirit, love to Christ, zeal for souls, or whatever you please to call it. I think I can much easier convince a hearer that he is a sinner, and in danger, than I can persuade, induce, move him to become a Christian. This lack runs through all my discourses, because it exists before, in my life, my soul. I must endeavor to realize better the idea of an '*Earnest Ministry*.'

"Jan. 14. Preached [at East Bradford] in the morning upon God's sovereignty, with more than usual interest and delight to myself. I mark with pleasure an increasing tendency in my mind, of late, towards the fundamental truths in theology, and I become more and more convinced of the superior practical benefit of the judicious preaching of these doctrines, over that of others. My preaching, studies, and meditations have probably been too little upon these *foundation courses* in theology. I hope, however, it is only the common

error of youth, which riper years may perhaps remove.

"I may also make another record here, (although it reflects somewhat upon my former ministerial life,) namely, an increasing delight in preaching. It is still difficult for me to make tolerable preparation for the pulpit, (much more difficult, I apprehend, than with most preachers,) but when once made, I count it both an honor and a privilege to deliver the message, when men will hear. And now, in view of having spoken twice to-day to a congregation of strangers, whom I may never see again until the judgment, there is comfort in the thought, — the hope, that some one truth may find a fruitful lodgment in some one soul, to the honor of my Lord, and to my own surprise in the day of accounts. Such a hope is one of the precious compensations which the Master makes to his laboring servants, in consideration of their being denied the sweet repose, the delicious quiet of Christian meditation, which the pious layman enjoys.

"Jan. 15. Monday and Mondayish; wearied and irresolute. Spent most of the day in small matters about the house, of little importance, and requiring little effort or care on my part.

"I should be greatly troubled at spending Mondays thus, were there any important duties which I were able to perform in such a state of mind and body, or were I able to avoid that lassitude which seems to come of Sabbath labor and excitement. So here I make a lamentable record, — a day lost, or spent to no important and useful purpose.

"Jan. 17. Have been occupied to-day chiefly in preparing for a Lyceum Lecture upon Astronomy; and, from attempts to represent in a diagram of diminished scale the relative distance of the heavenly bodies, planets, stars, and nebulæ, was led into a pleasing and not profitless train of thought concerning the vast extent of the material universe, its order, glory, &c., and of the superior glory of Him whose garment is so resplendent. What is man, amid such magnificent displays! And yet is he not something, since he is a part of this vast scheme, and since he can rise to a knowledge of, at least, some things throughout the whole? He knows much, and is greatly wise, if he knows only how small a part he himself is in the great drama.

"Jan. 18. Were it possible to give our conceptions of God a definite form, a real, personal existence, how infinitely it would fall below God, and how most of us would probably be shocked, at seeing what an idol — *eidolon* — we had been adoring as the ever-blessed God! And how can we ever fear, love, trust, or serve Him as we ought, so long as our views of his desert of such service from us are so sadly imperfect? Unfold, O God, more and more of thine unsearchable excellence to my view, that I may feel more and more powerful motives to become like Thee, and to lead others to a saving knowledge of Thee!

"Saturday, Jan. 20. Greatly hurried to-day by professional labor and much care, with various secular distractions. I would fain convince myself that these lesser concerns are a part of my appointed work, and

as such, will somehow be made to play into the great scheme of things, and so have part in great results; but after all my own and others' reasoning upon the subject, there is left the dreadful possibility, not to say *probability*, that these things are recorded in God's Book as '*Trifles!*' I know, indeed, that Paul was sometimes 'in a basket,' but am I a Paul?

"The Sabbath nears! Oh for some definite intimation from above, as to what I shall say on the morrow.

"21st. Wearied out, exhausted, — having conducted public service three times, — a course ruinous to health, and fatal to that *rest* which is necessary to the proper keeping of Sabbaths, but a course to which I seem to be driven.

"22d. In visiting the sick, have been struck with the great variety of diseases by which God brings about the separation of soul and body. Each has his own sorrow, and those best for him. I remember the remark of an excellent Christian woman, lingering along under that most dreadful disease, *the cancer*, saying she would not exchange it for any other. It was her Father's commissioned messenger to her, and the best one for her. Therefore she was satisfied. Have also been struck with the fact that God sometimes spares the aged after usefulness is ended, and the suffering when they can do nothing but suffer; while, on the other hand, He strikes down the strong and the useful, or dashes the joys of the happy, as if He would preserve and exercise his sovereignty in the matter of sickness and death, as in everything else. 'Where you can't unriddle, learn to trust!'

"24th. A day spent between distractions of things sacred and secular. The chiefest matter of deliberation has been, the proper time when it may be best to begin to be systematic with a young child, or administer what might be the beginning of correction. I concluded that the 'wisdom profitable to direct' is wisdom of another kind, or of a higher degree, than I at present possess.

"25th. Busy all day, partly, however, in attending to interruptions. My *busy-ness* has left me little time for thought.

"26th. Lyceum again. The lecturer endeavored to prove that we are the fourth race, at least, who have inhabited this country, leaving traces, &c. Anglo-Saxons, Indians, Mound-builders, and Northmen. All well and beautiful, if it be true. 'Important if true!' But a very few isolated facts are a slender support for such a theory. Great thing to steer clear both of infidelity and credulity; great thing to so control an enthusiastic mind, as that it shall not run into extravagances. Perhaps one brought up in the Orthodox faith is more liable to excessive conservatism than to the opposite extreme. Heaven keep me docile to all new truths, but slow to adopt errors or whims upon mere speciousness.

"Jan. 28th. Sabbath evening. Three services to-day. Not as wearied physically as usual; but somewhat anxious and uncertain (as I always am under similar circumstances) about the final result of preaching such discourses as to-day's, namely, 'Quench not the

Spirit'; 'One thing thou lackest.' I greatly desire to know how often such truths should be presented from the pulpit, in order to the best effect upon the hearer. My present views rather incline to the presenting of doctrinal discourses, which lay a broad foundation for practical inferences, rather than such alarming texts and subjects as the above. The Holy Ghost, interested alike for the truth He inspired, and for the souls for whose good it was inspired, be my constant Teacher.

"29th. A prosaic, volitionless, powerless, and, I had almost dared to add, *duty-less* Monday! I wonder if God intended that his people should ever keep his Sabbaths by such unremitted, toilsome *workings* as many ministers and Sabbath-school teachers experience.

"30th. In reading from the 'Missionary Herald,' to-day, an elaborate essay upon the Chinese language, I was struck with the indebtedness of the literary world to the labors and researches of some of our modest missionaries, albeit the world, in its wisdom, affects to despise the labors and the usefulness of Christianity. Shall Christianity always be thus slighted?

"31st. Again humbled and confused by thoughts of the extent and grandeur of the universe! Again encouraged and animated by the thought that I am able to walk over such an expanse of glory, know some of its features, call it mine, and know, too, that my spirit will still be young (God grant it may be happy also,) when all this magnificence shall be wearied with shining, and ask and receive a furlough from its great Governor. Is not man as exalted in his nature and

capacities as he could be with safety to the universe? Ere eternity shall end, will not man, in heaven, crowd close upon the attributes of Divinity? (I say it reverently.) Certain it is, he will transcend our present conceptions of Divinity.

"Feb. 4th. Sabbath evening. The morning discourse on the Prayers of Christ was not without profit and interest to myself, at least. And I think I can perceive an unusually good attention generally, to any subject or train of remark relating particularly to the Saviour. Herein is great encouragement to evangelical preaching, as well as a suggestion as to our *duty* so to preach.

"8th. I get time to think only on the run. How distracting, and even dissipating, the endless diversity and rapid succession of duties to which these latter days subject a minister! No wonder we wear out so soon, and accomplish so little except in little things!

"15th. Lack of sleep has helped on my natural dulness to such a degree that the sluggish pool of thought stagnates. But the examination of two candidates for admission to our church has awakened me to some thoughts, and withal has some quickened my hope; for past all hope is the mind that finds no food for reflection in such an event, and thrice dead the hope that is not quickened thereby! May it be the precursor of larger blessings!

"16th. Lyceum lecture this evening. Subject, St. Peter's Church, Rome. Interesting and instructive. Was impressed, during the description, by the thought

of the great indebtedness of art to Christianity, in that its finest specimens of painting and architecture have been suggested by it, to say nothing of poetry. Was also again impressed with the thought of the desirable and very great influence of a noble specimen of art, in awakening more elevated thoughts. I felt it during my imaginings of that church, and I have felt it before when looking on Allston's great painting, or listening to a fine concert. And while this train of thought awakened a very intense desire to visit the Old World, that desire was sweetly restrained by the thought of how much I am able to enjoy while staying at home, and hearing or reading of these things. I am quite sure my enjoyment here exceeds that of many who are permitted to gaze upon these things.

"18th. Wearied with three services; preached with some interest, and read, after service, with greater delight than ever before, Bunyan's account of the pilgrims awaiting, in Beulah, the summons from across the river of Death, to go and meet their Lord and Saviour. It seems to me the most beautiful part of the book, and one can hardly read it without forgetting, for the time, that death has any terrors.

"March 18th. Sabbath eve. Wearied and very hoarse. Unusually happy this evening, partly from my own meditations, and partly from reading a Life of the excellent Baxter. How full of suggestions! How sadly does my own ministry contrast with his! But he had a double baptism, above us. First, an uncommon *soul.* Second, the trials of an unsettled, stormy,

persecuting period, such as would burnish up any metal capable of a polish! The great Teacher make me more like himself, and more like his eminent servant of whom I have read.

"20th. Have reflected to-day upon the argument for inspiration of the Scriptures, drawn from Christ's example; his approval of the Jewish high regard for them. Christ was either a deceiver, or the rationalist is a blasphemer.

"22d. Subject of remark this evening,—The intercession of Christ,—giving rise to a pleasant and profitable train of thought, to myself. By interceding, He seems to be doing over and over again His great work for us! What a picture of His love and our need; what consolation, what encouragement to prayer, and to intercession for others! But oh, after all, how very far short of the truth all our conceptions of these sublime realities must fall!

"April 15th. At Thetford. A peaceful Sabbath of perfect rest! What a luxury! Would that lay people could appreciate the value of such a passive rest, compared with that rest which an active, laboring minister enjoys! Hope I may not be so passive and restful during my vacation as to make no progress whatever.

"In reading, to-day, 'An Earnest Church,' I was struck with this idea, namely,—It is peculiarly the Christian's duty to show forth the moral attributes of God, in distinction from, or in preference to, the natural attributes, which can be shown by other creatures equally well; while no other creature on earth can show

forth the moral attributes of Jehovah, especially his *holiness*, but Christians. Hence the unspeakable importance of a godly life and conversation. This is the Christian's peculiar work, and a great work, noble, honorable, quite sufficient for life and to call forth all his powers. To this may I be more and more devoted.

"June 12th. Visiting Andover and Boston in a part only of to-day, and doing business in both places; reading all the time in the cars, and not being wearied unusually to-night; these things impress me with the truth that we are living fast, much of life being crowded into each day, and of course the greater need of watchfulness in regard to influence; the greater need of haste in finishing life's great work. While the day is full of facilities, it is also fraught with obstacles to thought, reflection, self-inspection, and spiritual improvement. God has set one thing over against another. To be a good Christian at this day, requires more grace than with our fathers. A minister who would maintain his position as a leader of the flock and a teacher, must act quickly, and yet not act till he has 'looked this way and that.'

"June 30th. Saturday night. I propose by God's help to resume my pulpit labors to-morrow. A long rest has strengthened my voice; would that I could say, my heart also!

"Sept. 13th. Yesterday, saw at a funeral a most affecting exhibition of a mother's love. Thrice during the short interval before service, did she go into the adjoining room to take a final leave of her 'darling,

darling daughter'; bidding her husband to kiss her as she did; and when she had resumed her seat after the third adieu, she whispered to her husband, 'I want to go right back again.'

"O death, how deep is thy sting! O grave, how unrelenting thy victory! How soon does sweet become bitter, and hope change to grief and despair! And yet, how peaceful and even beautiful is the death-sleep of a little child! And how many alleviating thoughts a fruitful mind can suggest for the afflicted parent. Reading in this connection 'Solace for Bereaved Parents,' I was impressed with the idea of the great amount of joy that Christian hope has distilled from tears, and the many beautiful things (like flowers) that have sprung up from the graves of children. Verily, Christianity sheds 'light on little graves'; not only by the strong assurance of the child's salvation which it imparts, but also by its influence upon the mind and heart of the mourner, by reason of which influence he is enabled to have, or is capable of, such tender, delicate, and elevated feelings.

"Sept. 16th. Brought safely through another Sabbath's labor, and happy in being able to stand in my own place all day. More and more do I account it a privilege to preach the gospel, and little remains to be desired except that the word preached accomplish its end. I have thought I was more successful in presenting the appropriate truths to Christians, than theirs to the impenitent. My best endeavors to win them to Christ hitherto have seemed eminently unsuccessful.

I can seem to counsel inquirers with some degree of satisfaction to them and myself; but my appeals to the impenitent seem not only lost, but, many times, even to harden impenitence. This has cost me many a care, and still needs looking to.

"17th. In reading from Maitland's 'Church in the Catacombs,' was impressed with the simplicity and cheerfulness of the epitaphs inscribed by early Christians upon the tombs of their friends, and, while sensible that this is the true spirit of Christianity, could not but feel that it is lacking in the Church of this day. 'Verily,' in the language of one of the same, living when Christianity was proscribed,—'Verily, he can hardly be said to live, who lives in Christian times.' Lord, send us not persecution again, but send us the graces that have usually attended upon persecutions. The seeds of piety are doubtless slumbering in Christians, but they need a warmer—*hotter* climate in order to germinate well.

"18th. Attended the funeral of another child, where six days ago I was on the same sad errand,—two within one week,—one a few years since, and only one left! Why is all this, while neighbors' families are unbroken? The little remaining boy said, 'Father, two coaches are coming; I want to go and ride'; little thinking why that family ride was got up. 'Is the minister going to pray?' whispered he. Yes, my thoughtless child, he is going to pray that God will, in great mercy, make up to you the very great loss you have met with, in the death of that careful elder

sister, and that you may so live as to meet that sister in heaven.

"From this scene, made painful to parents by a child's death, I passed on to another, much more painful by reason of a child's present sufferings. A little one who could not know its right hand from its left, yet suffering apparently all that its nature could suffer, and infinitely more than you would suppose possible to such a child. Here is material for deep reflection. Not that any amount of reflection will solve the difficulty, but that reflection may help to understand the lesson God would teach us by the event.

"20th. Another of those most trying of all a minister's experiences to-day, namely,—a sudden summons to counsel an impenitent man, as suddenly summoned to prepare to meet his God. To hear him confess and bemoan his former obstinacy, plead for forgiveness with the God whom he had always thought he could face fearlessly,—so righteous he had been,—and then go the same round again, with groans from bodily suffering interspersed; to see all this, and then leave him to die, with the dreadful fear that in his distress he would exercise something else than simple faith in Christ, and so die relying upon a false hope; this is care and pain indeed!

"To have come to this scene from the sick-bed of an aged person whom I could address only through a trumpet; and then to hurry from it to the funeral of a poor colored girl, who had died homeless and friendless, but who, in her last hours, expressed a desire to

see her brothers, who were she knew not where, only that they were far off amid the sorrows of slavery; and then to go from this last to the funeral of a little child;—*this* has made out a day's labor, which, if it could impress others to whom I ministered as deeply as it has worn into my own body and mind, would be a day long to be remembered.

"It alleviates the distress of the labor very much to know that my presence was desired. Surely it is no small compliment to the truth I preach, to have me called to administer it where others are hardly endured. It is something surely to be associated in the mind with their last remembrances of earth.

"23d. Sabbath. At night too far exhausted to have those pleasant and vivid thoughts which the excited mind of a Sabbath evening sometimes gives rise to. This I regret, but cannot remedy.

"24th. Have been so much among the sick and afflicted of late, that I feel myself afflicted and sick. Surely I ought then to be better, and I think this part of my experience has not been without some good effect upon me. I have learned to sympathize with suffering as once I could not have done. Have learned, too, that there is deeper suffering to be sympathized with than I once supposed. Last week, on visiting a sick man, I thought I saw suffering in the eye of the wife as she anticipated being made a widow; but, on visiting that widow this evening, she unfolded to me a tale of her experience, compared with which all that I before saw her suffer, or supposed her to suffer, was a mere noth-

ing. And this has taken place under a thousand eyes near by, and no one has seen it but God's. All this, when many would have relieved the distress, could they have known it; but all was kept and pondered upon in silence by that poor wife! 'One half the world know not how the other half live.' How defective is Christian charity, that it does not reach, no, does not even *know* of its existence.

"Nov. 16th. In hearing a geological lecture to-night, was reminded of the deliberateness with which God works and prepares for working. 'A thousand years he takes to lift his hand off.' Also was reminded of the fact that He makes the ruins of one system, after they have lain and fermented for tens of thousands of years, then open, just when most needed, an inexhaustible store for man. Query: Are the ruins caused by sin to be worked up in any such way, for the better illustration of God's attributes, or the greater good of the redeemed?

"Jan. 1st, 1850. Though altogether doubtful as to whether I may see the end of this year, still I am glad I do not know what the future will be. Whether life or death, better not to know it long beforehand, provided one lives daily as he should. I feel like forgetting the things behind, (except to repent of the wrong,) and pressing on to the Infinite that stretches out before me.

"7th. Monday eve. Nervous and sensitive to-day, as is quite common, from the excitement of yesterday. It consumes my life, I am quite confident, and yet 'tis

not without its advantages. What a luxury it is to read good poetry in such a frame! Coleridge's Hymn and Apostrophe to Mt. Blanc wellnigh overcame me. This may be considered as one of the perquisites of my calling, perhaps not too dearly bought by the corresponding deadness that is apt to succeed.

"Feb. 5th. After a twenty days' calm on the dead sea of thought, ... the reading of Notices of Pepy's Diary, written at first in cipher and confidentially, but at last deciphered and published, awakened a train of solemn thought as to the manner in which the diary of every individual, written in cipher upon the world through which he passes, may yet, at some distant day, and when, perhaps, he has entirely forgotten it and all its records, be brought out and explained by the Judge, and thus our own footprints become evidences of our guilt.

"Aug. 22d. I this evening confess to some revival of religious feeling, attributable, under God, to reading the Journal of Dr. Chalmers' religious experience, and especially the firm hold which his faith and affection took of the gospel scheme of salvation through Christ. This too I believe, but do not live in it and by it so that it tinctures every sermon and suffuses my whole experience. There are times when no worldly possessions, no, nor intellectual joys, seem the *summum bonum*, but holiness of heart, conformity to the spirit and example of Christ. It should always be so.

'Oh for a closer walk with God!'

"25th. Sabbath eve. Unusually wearied by rea-

son of unusual excitement, in preaching an exceedingly plain sermon to the negligent and worldly members of the church. I grow more and more distrustful of the good effects of such severe preaching; and, in reading Dr. Chalmers of late, become confirmed in my convictions that it is the simple, affectionate, dignified presentation of the gospel doctrines, all suffused with the spirit of piety in the speaker, that is most effectual in saving souls, and elevating the standard of piety and morality in the Church. I am ashamed to confess that *that* is for me just the most difficult style of preaching. I will also record my full purpose to seek the grace that shall enable me at least to approximate to that style of preaching. I only wonder that I did not discover, years ago, that more piety, more of the gospel faith and spirit, was the thing I needed. May a forgiving Heaven help me to redeem the time.

"Sept. 8th. Sabbath. Preached to-day with little satisfaction to myself. Since service have been reading Chalmers with great satisfaction, and felt more than ever the necessity of being able to infuse the doctrines of the Cross into all discourses in order to do good to hearers. It is not so much dissatisfaction as *pain*, with which I now look upon many sermons that I have preached, and, I must add, many that I still preach; for although fully conscious of their lack, I cannot supply that lack by the mere will. Those doctrines which are needed must first pass experimentally through my own soul, ere they can enter into the spirit of discourses and characterize that spirit. God grant the

grace needed rightly to divide His holy Word,—so to divide it as to honor His Son as the appointed Saviour for lost man.

"Nov. 4th. Monday. Weary and sad from tax on nervous system yesterday. Funeral of a very exemplary sister in Christ; in which service, from her character and that of her husband, I was drawn into an unusually happy frame, considering God and the Saviour's great kindness to His dying and mourning children. Never before had so satisfying views of the all-sufficiency of faith in Christ, or, in other words, of the consolations of religion for the wants of the sorrowing soul in life. The luxury of this frame of feeling was greatly increased by that very nervousness that came of yesterday's labors. This excitability made my joy intense. I record this as one of the incidental rewards of the ministry,—a sort of compensation for excessive labor, and coming, too, at the very hour when most needed. Oh that when deep sorrow visits me and mine by reason of death, we may feel, as I to-day felt that every Christian might feel, in committing a Christian friend to his sleep in Jesus!

"Dec. 14th. Deeply affected this evening at seeing a little child sick unto death,—an only and well-beloved child! My first thought was, 'Why is our own spared?' and the thought awakened a sense of dependance on God, with a gratitude altogether unusual. Then came a gush of sympathy for the parents. Oh, could I bear up under the same trial? I do earnestly beseech God, if it may be possible, to teach me what I

greatly need, by some gentler means than the death of my child or wife!

"March 18th, 1852. Have encouraged hope and peace to-day by reflecting on the universality of the Church of Christ (Eph. iii. 15), and considering myself a member and minister of *that*, rather than of any particular branch. What if *this* one church fails; *the* Church yet stands secure and glorious. What if my prayers do not seem to bring a blessing here; is it certain they bring a blessing to no remote part of the Great Family? How anxious should I be to know whether I am a child in that family; and if I am, then how erect should I walk, and how steady and fixed should be my hope! O God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (three generations in the same family), grant me and my family a home in the House with many mansions!

"26th. Have been greatly pained for a few days past, on learning that very cold and even hard feelings have for a long time existed between some of the prominent members of my church, and which I had not once suspected. It seems to account for the alarming coldness in spiritual things throughout the church, and for the fact that our social religious meetings have for a long time been so very *un*social. It also shows how little a minister may know of that which, in order to be successful, he ought to know best. . . .

"Finished reading the Memoirs of Mary Lyon, and of Margaret Fuller. Interesting both, and for entirely different reasons. Interesting, as specimens of the two

classes of character formed by or under the two religious systems,—Orthodoxy and Unitarianism. Interesting, as showing the kind of character most current and most admired in each; interesting, also, (Miss Fuller's) as showing the estimate which Unitarian clergymen put upon mere intellectual culture in comparison with moral and Christian excellence. Three clergymen-editors,—and not one of them, nor the subject of their remarks, drops the slightest word or hint as to the worth or importance of those traits which evangelical Christians all allow to be essential to Christian character and hope. I am glad thus to have seen an extreme representation of the effects of a system and culture which claims for itself so much in comparison with all others as Unitarianism in and around Boston does.

"April 5th. Monday. Wearied and worn with the triple labors of the Sabbath, upon which were piled, to-day, duties to the sick and to schools, and the mind kept from rest by the appalling thought of Fast Day only three days before me, and, until this evening, I without even a subject or text! But something *will be*—doubtless.

'The darkest day,
Live till to-morrow, will have passed away.'

"11th. Preached at Bellville, where there was some unusual interest in the congregation. This fact gave me a new and a very delightful interest in my services, and especially the sermon. How different it seemed than when I preached it to my own people!

How much more spiritual and powerful! I felt happy that my subject was so nearly related to Christ,—'Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day,' &c. I do not remember to have felt so spiritual and peaceful before, during all my ministry.

"June 3d. Absent on a three weeks' vacation, not without profit or pleasure. Returned, I trust, more contented with my profession and my place. Mortified and ashamed of myself at having been a little disturbed by the fact that other ministers of my acquaintance had been flattered with 'calls,' larger salaries, &c., &c. I hope God will forgive me in this, and guard me from any repetition of it, on any account. Feel disposed to bend myself with greater energy and cheerfulness to my appropriate work. God help me to be a faithful minister of Jesus Christ, and, if pleasing to Him, a successful minister. . . . . Was encouraged to find so many present at our weekly conference meeting this evening. May it prove a precursor of good. What could give me greater delight than to have pleasure in that meeting which has so often been made the most burdensome thing possible?"

In the summer of 1853, Mr. Hosford preached a sermon to his own congregation, which, on account of its supposed charges against the intelligence and morals of a certain class of artisans in the town, greatly roused and excited a large number who supposed themselves injured. The sermon, preached with the kindest and best intentions, was perhaps unintentionally careless in

some of its statements, and somewhat lacking in the preacher's usual discrimination; but it was widely and persistently misunderstood and misrepresented. It is to a very severe handbill, circulated through the town, and evidently written under the influence of erroneous and highly excited impressions, that Mr. Hosford so candidly and so kindly refers in the following extract from a private paper, dated August 5, 1853:—

"Have seen to-day a rejoinder issued by a shoemaker, in defence from charges which he supposed I brought against his craft in a sermon, two weeks since. A review of the sermon convinces me that great care is necessary, lest a class be involved in a charge which may be true only of individuals in it. It also convinces me that no amount of care is sufficient to prevent all misunderstanding, especially where the report of what is said has to pass through two or three hands. I regret the misapprehension, since I had at heart only the good of the class most offended by what I said. How impossible for a finite mind to foresee all the constructions which different minds will put upon the same thing! If my judgment does not deceive me, I do find in me a growing desire after the simplicity there is in Christ, and to preach Him more, and all other things less. Sadly as I may still come short of duty in this particular, I am not so wofully deficient as I have formerly been. I cannot but think that my Redeemer is drawing me unto Himself. Oh that I were more ready to run after Him! I have now a strong ambition to become a good Christian and a good Christian

minister. The great and good Shepherd be merciful unto me. May His gentleness make me great."

In 1854, Mr. Hosford wrote:—"All our sick are slowly convalescing except Captain A——, who seemed to-day to give us all a presentiment we might not again meet in the flesh. It was a very pleasant, but very affecting interview. . . . . How much more satisfactory than to have got off a popular sermon! Oh, the work of the ministry, well done, is a blessed work! I wish I could always feel its power and dignity. How wofully I fall short of it most of the time."

Again he writes:—"Wearied with numerous labors, but not unhappy. I have dwelt much to-day [Sabbath] upon the privilege of being allowed to administer the sacraments of our holy religion to the needy and hungering souls. I have said the last consolatory words in public concerning what Christianity had done for Mr. M——, and is now doing for him on high. I have applied the covenant of mercy in baptism to Mr. D——'s youngest. I have offered, with the bread and wine, the rich benefits of the Saviour's death to my church and people, and, since that time, have visited and comforted the young Mr. G——, who seems very near his departure. How precious the religion that comes with healing to man in his direst need, and how honored the minister of it! Is it strange that of him who fulfils this ministry faithfully, the people say, 'How beautiful upon the mountains,' &c.

"I summed up these matters in my concert remarks this evening, and was affected by them myself, however

little others may have felt them. I sometimes think I am only just beginning to feel interested in the religion of the gospel. Certainly my interest in it is increasing daily. I desire to become a good minister."

The following, though not given in the exact order of its date, is full of suggestion:—"On a late visit to the Athenæum, in Boston, I was not a little puzzled to see a number of books on different shelves, with the strange title, '*Succedaneum*,' on their backs. I thought over the catalogues I had seen. I thought of the literary world which gives notices of new books. I thought of the great antiquarian bookstore in Cornhill, which I had looked over from basement to attic, but could not remember ever having seen any of these books, new or second hand, or any quotations from them, or the slightest allusion to them in any way.

"The first one that attracted my attention was standing at the end of the Philosophical Transactions, and was the last volume upon that shelf. This led me to think it might be a sort of appendix to that great work, containing something of importance lately discovered. This thought was encouraged by what I conjectured might be the etymology of the name *Succedaneum*,—*i. e.* that which *succeeds* to something else,—an addendum, or something similar to it. But to solve my doubts at once, I drew it from its place, and, turning it around, found it *a wooden block!* painted and lettered on the back like other books, and placed there merely to keep the other books on the shelf upright and in their places. On looking around I noticed them in

several places, but never except where there were not genuine books enough to fill out the shelf. Having then a curiosity to know what might be the true significance of the word, and thus the design of the books, I took down a Latin lexicon, and found its definition to be, 'Coming in the place of another.' Of course, then, in this case it meant *a wooden block, standing in the place of a genuine book.*

"The discovery set me thinking. I at once recollected having heard a pastor liken his church to his library, in which the various books were types of the different characters in his church; for instance, there were Commentaries on the Bible, Mammon, The Golden Rule, Polemic Theology, The Advocate of Peace, Christian Assurance, The Broken Anchor, Christianity Demonstrated, Christianity Refuted, Profession not Practice, Essays on Style, Guide to Inquirers, &c., &c. But what, thought I, could he have called this? Of what church-member is *this* a counterpart? Is it, thought I, (for he had often urged the duty of hearing for ourselves and not for our neighbors,) is it, in any respect, a type of myself? Does the great Teacher, whose Epistle I profess to be, and in whose library I have posted myself, consider me a *Succedaneum* there? Is my name the principal part of me, and that name a deception? Is it my form that gives me value? Am I most useful when I am stock-still? Am I valued chiefly because the roughest usage cannot injure me? Am I here merely to fill up an empty space,—destined, of course, to be cast aside as

soon as anything valuable is found to take my place? Have others quoted anything from me which will prove and perpetuate my worth when I am worn out? Can I warm and enlighten others only by my combustion at last? Is my significance all upon the outside, and, for that poor semblance, am I indebted to paint? Am I most honored when my back is turned? Are all my neighbors consulted as oracles of wisdom, while I am passed by as lacking even the merit of the sounding brass or the tinkling cymbal? Or if any man, searching for truth, does happen in his simplicity to try me, is it only to turn away, muttering to himself, 'Were you not a great blockhead, you would be a great hypocrite'? Am I flattering myself that because I am in a goodly building, and in a goodly fellowship, I am therefore a genuine Epistle, and shall be saved with them? What would be my worth if tried alone?

"*What sort of a library would it be, made up of Succedanea only; and how would a preacher succeed, who had only such works to refer to, for illustration and authority?*

"Not wholly useless are Succedanea, if they shall be the stupid occasion of driving home upon the conscience any of the above questions."

CHAPTER III.

THE PASTOR CONTINUED.

> "I venerate the man whose heart is warm,
> Whose hands are pure ; whose doctrine and whose life,
> Coincident, exhibit lucid proof
> That he is honest in the sacred cause."
>
> COWPER.

THE foregoing chapter covers only about nine years, and those the first years of Mr. Hosford's pastoral life. Though it furnishes a fair picture of his ordinary labors and experience during his entire ministry in Haverhill, it seems proper to introduce extracts from his letters and papers which shall better illustrate certain phases of his character not so distinctly brought to view, and have more special reference to his later years.

Many who had but a slight knowledge of Mr. Hosford's inner character as a pastor and a friend, thought him unsocial and distant ; and some thoughtlessly ascribed his reticence to indifference or to the lack of kindliness of feeling. In a familiar sermon preached May 22, 1859, on the fourteenth anniversary of his ordination, he refers to his reticence, and to the views which some had entertained respecting it, in language which, besides laying open to inspection the pastor's heart, is interesting and important as an accurate pic-

ture of many a pastor's experience. No apology is offered for introducing a somewhat extended extract from a sermon, all of which would richly repay a perusal.

"Another matter of personal interest to myself, and of practical importance to you, I wish to mention, and that is, *The want of familiarity on the part of the pastor with the people.*

"The idea seems to be that he is often distant and reserved, of a cool temperament, or absent-minded, or wrapped up in his own personal interests, to such an extent as to impair his religious influence.

"Allowing that half of this may be as alleged, (which is perhaps a large allowance for the popular and current impressions of this hasty age,) even this half is more than I am willing to have go forth without its proper qualifications and explanations.

"In the first place, the draft which a constant ministry in one place makes upon the mind, is sufficient to burden it continually. It is, most of the time, either weary from a work done, or anxious for a work to be done. Scarcely does it cease from one business, ere it is busy again collecting materials for use on the next occasion. Oh, how short and insufficient the sleep between Sabbath eve and Monday morning! The mind is working at some doctrinal theory to be demonstrated, or some problem of practical improvement to be effected. It is rarely, for a day or an hour, free from such care. The burden betrays itself in the anxious look, the hurried gait, and an inability to join fully in the free, elastic pleasures of others. And hence, there is never anything like a solid rest or vacation to the mind of a minister, while remaining amid scenes that are continually reminding him of a great something to be done. There must be distance between him and these scenes, ere he can rest and recover, as other persons do. Here, therefore, is one apology that should be made for him.

"Again, consider *the burden of sorrows* on his people's

account, which he continually shares. He has a part in every affliction that occurs among all the numerous families of his congregation. He not only knows of them, but *feels* them; he is not a mere observer of them, but is invited in to their privacy, to see how deep and sacred the sorrow is, and to present the gospel alleviations for it. And with a good minister, among a good people, this is no mere pretence of sympathy. It is a reality that takes strong hold on his tenderest sensibilities, — which sensibilities, instead of becoming hardened by use, only become the more lively.

"Now consider how long, deep, and exhausting is any such scene to your own hearts; and then imagine, if possible, what the effect must be of a repetition of something like this, with every month of the year, and for a succession of years!

"Then consider what a train of sad associations, like a group of mourners in their weeds, will people his mind as he passes around his parish. From this house was borne out a lovely and beautiful daughter, amid the heart-breakings of the family; from that, a husband and father, dying without Christian hope, and leaving widow and orphans destitute of everything save industry, and virtue, and grief. In this house died the model husband and father, the venerated Christian and citizen, respected equally in Church and State, followed, with only a brief interval, by a help meet for such a man, — a family broken up, a house deserted forever! In that, the young Christian wife and mother received her summons in such a day and hour as 'she thought not,' and behold, the house is left, to our memory at least, desolate till now! And from this home and household have vanished, in the early morning of their life, all the children which God had given them, or so many sweet little ones that none but the bereaved parents attempt to remember them by name and order; and from the next, as many and in the same circumstances, as if the holy angels were in rivalry to see from which the larger harvest of beauty could be gathered.

"In *that* house I had part in a funeral service over a drowned brother and son; in that, the same of a suicide; here, of a man

killed by a fall from a loft, and there, of a woman killed by being thrown from a carriage. Here, I was called in to pray over the death-bed of a hardened transgressor, and there, over a woman that had been a sinner, — both anxious for salvation, crying for mercy, and so they passed to their account.

"In houses without number have I seen 'the last of earth,' with many a Christian, of whose departure to their rest we never can think without a fresh consciousness of the void which their absence from the Church has caused.

"A ministry of fourteen years calls a man, on such missions as these, to more than half the families and homes of his congregation; so that no small portion of his living charge are associated with what they and he have lost, and with the soul-furrowing scenes which attended that loss. He not only, therefore, is in tender contact with all the newly bereaved, but with those whose faces suggest afresh their former bereavements. He meets them in pleasant scenes, and when they seem to be happy; and yet no glossings of present happiness on their faces can erase from his memory the deep traces of that sad day of their sad visitation. Such associations as these, at once most sacred and yet the most saddening to the spirit, are what a pastor's mind is chiefly peopled with, as he traverses his parish or mingles with his people. The walls of his memory are, as it were, lined around by memoirs and portraits of his best earthly friends. You can readily perceive that they must give a sober coloring to his spirit; that he can never be what he might be in point of social gladness, had these facts never been; or had he had no more to do with them than one of his people. A part of the great cloud of witnesses with which his mind is encompassed, are the dead, and they who are still mourning for the dead; and hence his cheerfulness must always be that subdued cheerfulness which Christianity has in a cemetery, — a joy amid sorrow; a hope smiling through tears; a bright star shining amid the night.

"Besides, a pastor is liable every day and hour to a sudden summons to some most sacred and solemn religious duty; and

if his heart be in his calling, he must be anxious not to be found, at any time, amid scenes or in a state of mind totally unfit for such a duty. The constant expectation of this, acts as a perpetual restraint. These coming events cast their shadows before. He is continually sobered by the thought, 'We know not what a day or an hour may bring forth; therefore let our hearts be always in order.'

"I have heard of Christian ministers who made it a matter of conscience to unbend and be merry on their return from a funeral, in order that they might live and have health to attend the next; but such a course has never won my convictions, much less my taste and inclinations.

"I freely admit that the perfection of ministerial character would be, the ability to be most agreeable, sociable, and accessible in all common intercourse, and at the same time to have the deep qualities that would command and retain serious respect and confidence in the most sacred services; and I admit that some few — one in a hundred perhaps — attain to this. But, as I have no claim to that rare combination of opposite graces, and must therefore submit to a deficiency in one class, I have no hesitancy in choosing that the lack be in the social elements, needful in our common intercourse, rather than in those which are more strictly ministerial and needed in your times of trial.

"Whenever I learn that I have failed to win the confidence of a person to a pleasant social familiarity, I am always troubled and grieved, but I try to submit to it as I do to other misfortunes, comforting myself that the defect is not fundamental, and, though it may mar the man, does not ruin the minister.

"But should I learn that some anxious sinner, who had brought to me his burden, found only a cold reception and no sympathy or help; or that a dying person craving religious strengthening, or an afflicted household pining for Christian consolation, could not cordially invite me there because of a general deportment and spirit which were incongruous with such high services, *that* would give me distress indeed! *That*

were a defect for which there could be no compensation or apology. But as long as you have a ministry which is not charged with serious short-coming in *this* department of duty, your condition is not as unfortunate as it might be, were his deficiency on the other wing of his character.

"Few people are so spiritual and Christian as to have no need that many things should be forgiven them on the score of the infirmities of the flesh; and few ministers are so apostolic as to be able to minister to their own bodily necessities by their own hands, or work on among their people with the same steadfast courage and hope, whatever be the estimate placed upon their labors by those for whom they work. We all need human sympathy, because we are human; and we need some expressions of it, because we are not omniscient."

In November, 1862, when absent from home, Mr. Hosford wrote to the children and youth in the Centre Sabbath School: —

"Dear Young Friends, — I have been sitting in my accustomed side-slip, interested as usual in all the exercises of your concert, and not less interested in your deportment, as indicating your feelings upon the great subject of your personal relation to God; for you are what you are in regard to that subject. That is the chief, I might almost say, the only thing God looks at when He weighs you in the balance.

"You have not seen me, perhaps have not thought of me during the whole evening; but I have thought of little else than you; and I have looked you all over again, searching for the serene smile, or the fixed eye, or the glistening tear which should say to me, — 'At last, this cold heart has melted;' or, 'That teacher's patient sowing for years has now begun to bear fruit;' or, 'That sainted parent's prayer has now been answered;' or, 'The striving Spirit, so long resisted, so often grieved, has at last won this new trophy to Christ.'

"I used to study your looks at the concert with great inter-

est, but never with a deeper and tenderer one than during this hour. I read an unusual solemnity upon your faces, as well I might; since one of your number, lovely and greatly beloved, has so recently gone up from your presence to give up her account, and to realize her new-found hope in her Saviour. And what report, think you, has she carried in of you and me, and of our improvement of our precious day of grace? — a question which makes me almost tremble to ask! Oh, how much more she now knows of heaven than we! And how much more deeply she *feels* on all these great subjects! — but no more than they deserve from us all. You are asking yourselves, 'Who next, from our pleasant circle — I? And if so, am I as ready? Is the Saviour *so* mine that I could die as peacefully, His rod and staff comforting me?'

"Perhaps the thoughts of some are wandering from these solemnities, or trifling in the midst of them; and they will go home farther from their Redeemer than when they came, and with less of the Holy Spirit's help in their souls, if indeed He be not grieved away from them forever! Oh, what will be the end of such a beginning! God hath said, and I need not repeat it.

"But from this painful thought, my mind hastens back to that child or youth, boy or girl, whose mind is to-night recording to itself the secret but strong resolution, 'From henceforth I follow my Redeemer;' or who is to-night feeling tenderly and deeply, as never before at a Sabbath School Concert, a trembling hope in Christ, yet still a *hope* worth more than worlds, the dawning of 'the peace of God which passeth understanding.' I *must* believe there are some such here to-night, and that a future confession will prove it true. My faith on this point amounts almost to vision. It is so, or it will be so, and my eyes shall see it before I die. So I rejoice in this new proof of a Saviour's love towards you personally, and of His approbation of *our* Sabbath School. In *your* blessings I too am blessed, and hardly *less* blessed than yourselves.

"With these few words, fewer than usual on this occasion,

not because my love towards you is drying up, but because my pen is stiff and slow, — with these words I close, only adding, in inspired words, my friendly and pastoral benediction: 'The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace.'"

The following, dated December 29, 1862, was written to be read at the Children's New-Year's Festival: —

"Dear Children, — some seventy-five or one hundred of you, I hope, — Please grant your pastor and friend one favor, namely: Blot out one hundred miles of cold distance which separate us; imagine this house in which you are to be the parsonage, and Dr. Crowell to be *me*. Then gather all close around me as you used to do, or rather let me squeeze myself into the midst of your happy group, and then keep very still, while we talk together for a few minutes. Let me first wish you all a happy New Year. Let me then tell you how glad I am to see you once more together, so many of you, and all so smiling and happy. *I have seen none so pleasant a sight since one year ago this day*, and every good little boy's and girl's cheerful face helps make it pleasant. How long could a shepherd keep his flock full without lambs? Only so long could a superintendent keep a Sabbath School, or a pastor a Church, without good children growing up. Hence your superintendent and pastor look upon you with great interest and love. We love you not merely for what you now are, but also for what we expect you will be by-and-by. Will you then try to be as good children *now*, as we will wish you to become good men and women years hence? The great and good Shepherd is still more deeply interested in you than we are or can be. Then will you try to be as good little Christians now as He wishes you to be? Will you try to be ready to take a place in His Church when He calls upon you to do so? or to go up to His heavenly home, if He should send His angels to call you?

"To these questions I hope many of you will say seriously but cheerfully, '*Yes*, if He will help me.'

"Now as to matters of less importance: — Can you recollect any of the things you promised last year? Who of you has tried to live up to that promise? And who will try to live still better the coming year? Who will promise, First, to be a better child; Second, to be a pleasanter and more cheerful child; and, Third, to try to make others better and happier? Now will not this be a good resolution with which to open this new year?

"Can you remember any who were present last year, but who are absent to-day? Can you recollect any one or more than one, who has gone up to be forever with the blessed Saviour? And did their death make you a better child, so that you are in some measure ready to follow them to that happy abode?

"Now sing for me some sweet hymns, (why should not 'Happy Land' be one of them, now that some of your number have gone thither since this festival last year?) then join with Dr. Crowell while he prays that God would bless us all. I will also try to join with you at that very hour; and if in prayer your thoughts are with Jesus, they will be near where mine will try to be. We shall be very near to each other, though we may not see each other with our bodily eyes. Now, a good-bye for a while, from your true friend and under-shepherd. 'Mizpah.' Let this be our motto while absent from each other."

To a young man, a member of his church, in Williams College, he wrote, January 17: —

"My Young Brother and Old Friend, — I had quite forgotten, until your letter brought it to mind again, how many 'letters missive' I had sent to Haverhill during your short stay there. Pray tell me how many times I said the same things over. And so you came, spent a vacation, and went away again without my seeing you! I never anticipated this when I

sent you to college with my blessing. I did not doubt in my thoughtless delight, that I should always be there to welcome you, and to rejoice in your progress. But Providence, wiser and stronger than we both, has stepped in between us; and when *He* is ready, and not till then, shall we see each other again as of old.

"I am sorry your visit at Andover switched your mind still further off from the ministerial track. Perhaps you would gather a different impression from Princeton, where they 'hold fast the form of sound words.' But if you complete your course under President Hopkins without being brought over to the profession which has done as much to develop *him*, as he has done to honor *it*, I shall give you over. The doctors then may take and dissect you; or dry you, and hang you up as an *illustration!*

"Now, brother and son, the Lord be with you in all your labors, joys, and trials. Be loyal in heart to Him who has purchased you, and He will take tenderest care of you. We shall, I am sure, meet frequently at His mercy seat, and I cannot fear that we shall not meet at last in His presence, to go no more out forever."

January 26th, he wrote to the younger members of his church: —

"I am glad to hear that you have decided to resume your meetings, and that without any solicitation from me. I cannot but regard it as the result of the Holy Spirit's work upon your minds, that same Spirit who is making many youth in your congregation unusually serious. Both together seem to me to encourage special hope, and to call for unusual labor. Open your hearts to drink in that hope; gird up your loins for that labor. Oh that you might see in full the blessing you pray for. But next to that is the waiting posture of soul, all prepared for the blessing, and ready for the *work* which it involves, — which state is a right state and a great blessing in itself, even if no

other comes to the unconverted. But it will surely come to them, when you are ready and waiting and doing.

"Could I speak to you personally this evening, I should take as text, Acts ii. 1, and say that it teaches, First, the spirit and manner in which you, young disciples of the Master, should feel and act towards *each other*, — 'all with one accord in one place.' Second, your spirit and manner with reference to the unconverted, — waiting in faith, and praying in faith, for the promised Spirit, the holy, living Power which at the same time revives Christians and recovers sinners. Like the primitive disciples, therefore, hang together and work together; for to this end were most of you drawn, at one time, into the kingdom.

"I will only add that to you, the younger members of the church, chiefly belongs the responsibility, the honor, and the privilege of looking after, and bringing in, those of your own age, and younger. They will take it more kindly from you than from the elders, and the Master will kindly assist in such efforts. Oh how I long to be situated as you now are, in reference to saving or helping to save fellow-sinners who show a willingness to be saved, and are looking toward Christians for help! I earnestly pray that you may all so act in this critical and hopeful hour, that you will forever remember this occasion with great delight."

To his young friend in Williams College, he wrote again, February 13th: —

"Now for the great question; and what is it in essence, save a strife about one capital letter: 'Shall my honorable title be *M.* D. or *D.* D.? Now anybody can see at a glance that there is a symmetry, a fulness and rotundity, an emphatic repetition of honor in the latter, which inheres not in the former. To be sure, I don't know how they feel upon one's back, having never worn either, but I know how they look upon the backs of others. Have you looked at the matter in this light? 'Hate to write'? Who don't, till they have learned? 'T is

nothing when once you are used to it. 'Can't produce one sermon a week'? Then try two, and you will get along — as other folks do! 'Coolness'? Just the *sine qua non* for a minister. Be flattered, abused, provoked, opposed, fussed over, &c., &c., and 'take it as coolly'! Admirable! Special qualification, *alias* a very loud call to the ministry! To say nothing of the importance of that attribute in lancing dropsical self-righteousness, amputating unruly members, setting the bones of hearts broken, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, &c., — is not *this* a field for a cool and steady hand?

"As to the delightful out-door exercise of the physician's life, let me say by way of illustration: — This morning at one o'clock, my brother, the doctor, was rung out of his warm bed and sweet dreams, dressed in the cold, harnessed his horse, drove four miles, and there he is still, now ten A. M. Delightful, extremely! While the minister could lie on, all the livelong night, far into the rosy morning, then leisurely arise and breakfast, — no horse to feed, no pig to squeal, no sleigh to mend, '*no nothing!*' Is not this the true felicity? Ask my brother (if you consider *me* an interested party) how he estimates the two in comparison. He will tell you, by all means, be a first-rate minister rather than a third-rate doctor.

"Thus, at length, have I opened up this subject, as it lies on the surface of my mind. *Glance-views.*

"Going down somewhat deeper into the subject, I would say that any dry or knotty theological point argued by you as well as you have argued the *doctrinal* side of this question, would make you a candidate for a D. D., 'or ere you was aware.' Some hungry parish would soon show you what is meant by a call to preach the gospel with a witness. As to abilities, &c., you are a poor judge either way as yet. But as to inclination, bias, bent, propension, you are a competent judge, for the present at least. And there I would let the matter rest for the present; not torturing the mind with continual questionings and reëxaminations, but, at the same time, keeping it open for future light.

"Much as I should rejoice to see you a first-rate minister, I should experience nothing but rejoicing to see you a first-class physician. The latter has a broad and easy field for whatever of religious influence he has the talent and disposition to exert."

To a parishioner who had been afflicted, he wrote, March 23: —

"Certainly your sickness did not cast any shadows upon the views which your spirit took of God's shining world abroad. His worlds and His works, as a whole, are very bright and happy. Sin has darkened but one small spot, and but a few souls comparatively. We are at present in an exceptional part of His realm, where we have to encounter sin and its painful consequences. Out of this department the gracious Redeemer has opened for us a way of escape into the very presence and home of life and bliss. And has He not also — oh wondrous mercy! — inclined your heart and mine, and the hearts of our wives and some of our children, to move on towards that world, through that way? Let us never forget this marvellous grace which has visited us, and our households, which are more precious to us than our souls. Yes, brother, although you and I suffer, and perhaps with an inner anguish which no mortal knows or suspects, yet let us always remember that in respect to our most valued and precious interests, He has been exceedingly kind and only kind."

Four years previous to the date of the last extract, an event occurred which occasioned one of the severest trials of Mr. Hosford's ministerial life. The North Church in Haverhill was organized March 30, 1859. While the measure met his approval as one called for by the interests of evangelical religion in the place, there were circumstances connected with it which, involving as they did his parting with a large number of

the beloved members of his flock, seemed to him for a time more than he could bear. Two days previous to the date of the organization, he wrote: —

"We are all rather sober. Preached yesterday with labor of spirit. The old church have decided to send a delegate to Council, with remonstrance, &c. So we may have more of a scene on Wednesday than we have anticipated. Things are developing slowly to show that I had best *not* go with the new church. The matter is now entirely beyond a doubt in my own mind."

On the morning of the day in which the Council met, he wrote: —

"All well and cheerful except self, who am anxious for the day. I have no hope whatever of an amicable adjustment of the difficulty. The Council can't do it. The good Lord take care of his own Ark."

On the day after the organization of the new church was effected, he wrote to friends in Vermont: —

"Council sat yesterday, and 'in view of all the circumstances,' &c., voted to set up a new church of eighty-two members from ours. Of course I feel something as you may suppose Adam to have felt, on waking to a sense of the awful vacuum in his side. An Eve is a beautiful creation, and much needed, but oh, this process of creating her!

"My own course is determined only for the present, or from day to day. I shall not hasten off; perhaps not go at all. I wait to see whether the pillar will go before, or whether it remains stationary over the door.

"Two things seem clear to me: First, the old church must not run down, and will not. Second, I cannot show any sufficient cause for leaving them to (accept an invitation to) go to the new. Thus matters stand, and will stand until Providence develops some movement.

"I am homesick enough these days. The spring, together with these church difficulties, which have tasked my judgment and tortured my affections, have made me sigh, 'Oh that I had wings like a dove,' &c. I have not had an average of three hours' good sleep for three past weeks. But I hope for more rest now."

In reference to the trial indicated in the foregoing extracts from Mr. Hosford's letters, one of his parishioners writes: —

"In all my intercourse with him, I have been deeply impressed with the uniformity of spirit manifested under the most trying circumstances. During the severe trials through which our church passed at the time of the 'division,' I never saw him thrown off his guard, and in the decision of the most delicate questions, amid the most exciting scenes, he was calm, and decided, and just. I have never known an instance in church difficulties, where the contending parties both clung so affectionately to the minister."

It is proper in this connection to record a few facts in regard to Mr. Hosford's *success* as a pastor.

During his entire pastoral career there was in the church a steady growth. At nearly every communion service, some persons, newly born into Christ's kingdom, were admitted to membership. The glorious revival of 1858 formed an exception to this kind of growth. Over fifty persons were gathered into the church as the fruits of that calm and quiet, yet deep and thorough work of grace. This revival was always a source of deep delight and satisfaction to Mr. Hosford, giving him fresh strength and courage, and sustaining him in the great trials that soon followed. He never could speak of it without deep emotion, and all

his utterances concerning it were full of devout thankfulness.

At the time of Mr. Hosford's settlement in May, 1845, the church embraced 168 members. During the fifteen years following, 170 were added. On the 30th of March, 1859, and shortly after, 98 members were dismissed to form the North Church. This loss left a smaller number in the Centre Church than at the time of his settlement. But from this time onward the church received constant accessions, and in November 1860, 40 members were received from the Winter Street Church, then recently disbanded. The membership at the time of Mr. Hosford's dismission, October 26, 1863, was 252, a larger number than before the withdrawal of those who composed the North Church.

In the conclusion of this chapter, it ought to be said that Mr. Hosford, though he never sought the popular favor, and in the common acceptance of the term was not popular either as a minister or as a citizen, was nevertheless held in profound respect by the whole community. While, as might be inferred from our knowledge of the man, he knew nothing of that policy and claptrap which, with some, is the secret of whatever success or popularity they have, the uniform consistency and quiet shining of his daily life, both as a Christian minister and a Christian citizen, won, even from those who widely differed from him in sentiment, the highest confidence and the tenderest love. He was alive to all that pertained to the intellectual, moral, and physical wants of those around him, and he often said

that his greatest success and most satisfying work were among the lowly, both in and out of his own parish.

Yet among his last records, we find the following pathetic words: "Oh that I had begun my ministry with the notions concerning it which I now entertain! But our most valuable knowledge comes often only by the experiences of mistakes and sorrows."

CHAPTER IV.

MR. HOSFORD IN THE PULPIT.

"Are *all* such teachers? Would to Heaven all were!
. . . . . .
. . . . . simple, grave, sincere;
In doctrine uncorrupt; in language plain,
And plain in manner; decent, solemn, chaste,
And natural in gesture; much impressed
Himself, as conscious of his awful charge,
And anxious mainly that the flock he feeds
May feel it too; affectionate in look,
And tender in address, as well becomes
A messenger of grace to guilty men.
Behold the picture! Is it like? Like whom?"

COWPER.

In permitting Mr. Hosford to speak mainly for himself amid the daily and ever-varying scenes of the pastor's life, he has given us also glimpses of the preacher. But he could not of course do more. Those who have known and appreciated him, are the best judges of his character as God's public ambassador. And it is not too much to say, that, in their estimation, Cowper's familiar and oft-quoted lines are rarely applied with more exact appropriateness to a modern New England preacher than to him. Never did a man more heartily abhor pretension, claptrap, and noisy emptiness in the pulpit than he. Never did

a preacher more thoroughly despise the substitution of "philosophy and vain deceit," and "oppositions of science falsely so called," for the simple gospel; or the putting of self in the place of Christ. Cordially and strongly, as well as intelligently, attached to the old doctrines of the Reformation and of the New England Fathers, which, in his inmost heart, he believed to be the doctrines of Paul, and, better than all, of Christ, he never swerved in defending them against all attacks and all threatening dangers on the right hand and on the left. Yet he never did this roughly nor coarsely. He was always the gentleman, as well as the ambassador of God, both in the pulpit and out of it. Simple, yet original; quiet, yet often very striking; earnest, yet ever kind; keen, yet always delicate and dignified; pointed, yet never rudely personal, his sermons were deeply impressive, and always full of useful and serious practical lessons.

The readers of the "Boston Recorder" will not soon forget a series of articles published in that paper during the winter and spring of 1857, upon "Great Sermons," over the signature "Cecil." The happy blending of satire with tender and earnest seriousness which characterized the articles, has not often been exceeded. They were very extensively read and discussed in this country, and were reprinted in England; and from various sources their author had abundant evidence that they accomplished much good. With an omission or modification of a single statement, to which a friendly critic called his attention, he became

more and more impressed with the correctness and importance of his position, as expressed in the articles, as long as he lived. And never to his dying day did the words of Cowper find in a human breast a more hearty response than in his: —

> "Of all ambitions man may entertain,
> The worst that can invade a sickly brain,
> Is that which angles hourly for surprise,
> And baits its hook with prodiges and lies.
> Credulous infancy, or age as weak,
> Are fittest auditors for such to seek,
> Who to please others will themselves disgrace,
> Yet please not, but affront you to your face."

Nothing could be more unjust to Mr. Hosford, as a preacher, than to infer from his abhorrence of what he playfully calls "great sermons," and "great efforts," that he did not like truly great sermons, or that he could not, and did not often, preach them. It was not in his nature to slight any work he undertook to perform. "Whatever is worth doing at all is worth doing well," was the practical motto of his life. And this was especially true of his preparations for the pulpit. Every sermon, if not perfect of its kind, bore the distinct marks of careful thought, worthy of the hearer's close attention. There was, indeed, such uniform excellence in his ordinary preaching, that while some of his hearers ceased to take special notice of his real ability, and a few perhaps never fully comprehended it, others, of more than the average culture, never ceased to wonder how a feeble man like him could write and say so much that evinced patient thought and careful preparation. No sermon ever preached by him could properly

be called "small," while scores of sermons, year after year, though not "great sermons," in the popular sense of those familiar words, were really great in everything but pretension and the noisy applauses of superficial hearers.

An intelligent member of his congregation remarked, soon after his death, that he had never received from the lips of any other preacher so much and such really important instruction as from him. Many others would bear a similar testimony. A lady, long one of his hearers, writes: —

"One of the most marked characteristics of Mr. Hosford's preaching was the peculiar fullness and clearness of his views, and the beauty and tenderness of his language, when speaking of the future world, of heaven as the home and rest of believers, and the consummation of the interrupted joys and plans of this life. He seemed almost to have entered into the secrets of those things which are not seen, and to have his soul so filled with the ineffable glory as to want only the dialect of angels to reveal it to others. His eyes had seen the King in his beauty, and beheld the land that is very far off. Who that has heard him often cannot recall the light which shone from his eyes, and the meaning which animated his tones, as he dwelt upon these lofty themes! On such occasions we felt lifted above the level of our wonted experience on the wings of his faith and spirituality, and permitted for a time to breathe the air of the heavenly city."

Were it practicable, it would be both pleasant and profitable to introduce whole sermons as examples of the characteristics to which these testimonies of Mr. Hosford's hearers refer. In reading his manuscripts, one is specially struck with the tenderness and apposite

beauty of his illustrations of truth. In this he particularly excelled. Yet, so unconscious of it was he himself, he ever longed to possess the very talent which others thought so prominent as an element of his power. And to acquire or to augment an ability to use it, as well as to gratify his longings for other reasons, he cherished, for years, a very strong desire, and often half matured plans, of visiting the Holy Land. It was, indeed, only after the progress of disease had placed the accomplishment of such a journey beyond all reasonable hope, that he finally abandoned the thought, or rather, as he said, "exchanged it for the anticipation of soon visiting the New Jerusalem instead of the Old."

It would be easy to multiply extracts from Mr. Hosford's sermons and correspondence illustrative of his views of truth and duty as God's ambassador to men. The following, from a sermon preached January 27, 1860, at the rededication of the Centre Church, is sufficient, and well strikes the key-note of his whole ministry: —

"Comprehensively, our creed is the Gospel, the whole Gospel, and nothing but the Gospel, Jesus Christ being our chief corner-stone. More specifically, the Pauline Theology, unfolded and defined by Athanasius and Augustine, in opposition to Arius and Pelagius; still more exactly defined by Calvin, as opposed to the subsequent doctrines of Arminius; and yet again by our own imperial Edwards, defined and defended in opposition to the loose Arminianism of his day; — doctrines which have held their place in the religious affections of the Church, in spite of a most violent natural hatred of the same,

from the day when the Roman skeptic replied tauntingly to Paul's idea of God's sovereignty, 'Why doth he yet find fault,' down to the more refined, but less manly skepticism of this our day; doctrines which have made converts of thousands who began to study them for the sole purpose of exposing their absurdities, — changing heart-hate into the strongest and tenderest love; the old primitive faith, in the line of which the great mass of piety, benevolence, reform, and even of cultivation has been found for fifteen centuries; the old rigid faith which has always in the end proved itself the most merciful and convenient for men; the old sovereign, inflexible faith which has always been both the parent and the protector of personal liberty; the faith from which fallen humanity at first revolts, but to which it ultimately returns for that strong consolation which no easier faith can give; from which the tide of popular sentiment of New England, for a quarter of a century past, has seemed to be ebbing, but back towards which it now is silently flowing; our own ancestral faith, on which the first church in this town was planted, two hundred and nineteen years ago, — which has been preached by a succession of eleven ministers, believed in, relied on, submitted to, by six generations of good people; a faith, for the love of which our Puritan ancestors exchanged the delights of Old England for the bald rigors of the New, counting themselves enriched by the exchange; a faith, for the liberty and love of which a generation, within the memory of some of you, cheerfully repeated the sacrifices of the first settlers here, by leaving the old sanctuary home, funds, friends, prestige, and the good-will of the village aristocracy; doctrines which regenerate the character and control the life as none others do, awakening strength and then clothing that strength with comeliness; stirring up and yet restraining the forces of the individual soul — thus at once exciting and regulating Reform; doctrines to which all minds turn, whenever the Holy Spirit of truth is abroad, and to which the stricken soul flies for comfort, when all other consolations fail; doctrines strong, pure, regenerating, edifying, comforting,

and we must add, sweet beyond all comparison with any of a looser type ; that system of religious doctrines whose central point is the Cross of Christ, as it is the centre of our religious experience, and as it is erelong to be the centre of interest to the whole world ; — *these* are the doctrines on which this church was founded, has been perpetuated, and still stands. As Ward, and Rolfe, and Phelps, and others have preached here, so should we preach, had we their ability. We have no scruples about standing here in the line of their successors. We have no fears that their ghosts will ever rise to reprove us for being covert sappers and miners under the strong foundations which they laid in a sterling wisdom and piety.

. . . . . .

"I trust I shall be excused for adding, in conclusion, a few remarks of a more personal nature, and pertaining to myself, as the minister of this church and congregation.

"As to doctrinal views, we have said that we have nothing novel, original, or peculiar. Our reading and thought, our observation and experience, have disclosed to us no essential looseness or absurdities in the doctrines of our ancestral faith. We have never felt personally cramped by them, either in the freedom of conscience or of speech. It has sometimes been suggested to us that our popularity, and therefore our usefulness, would be increased by slightly loosening our theological girdle ; and we have always promised such improvement as soon as the first case shall be pointed out in which, having yielded one inch, logical consistency did not soon drive the man to the end of his strap.

"We have never yet come to an emergency where we needed a new revelation of doctrine, or an essential modification of the old. On the other hand, whatever of liberty we have had, has come through a hearty subjection to these truths ; and whatever of good we have attempted, received its origin and impulse from the same source. They have furnished whatever of power has been in our preaching, whatever of consolation we have imparted to the afflicted, whatever of relief to the

anxious inquirer. We never have attempted to add to, or subtract from these, without erelong being convicted of mistake; never even meditated such alteration, without ultimately being ashamed of our folly.

"Hence we have no crochets in the faith we shall here preach. We heartily adopt the old confessions; we inquire for the old paths, worn smooth by the feet of the pious ages; we rest in the simplicity and naturalness of the early Church polity, and are, as we think, quite primitive in the whole matter of our faith and taste. We never had a hobby in theology, or even in reform; and are now rather too old to lasso one wild, and break it in, and not quite old enough to begin to ride that most pitiful of all hobbies, namely, what WE have done to help the Almighty carry on His cause in the world.

"We therefore promise no novelty in regard to the way of salvation for sinners; no loosening of the hold which the law has on them, save through faith in Him who is 'the end of the law' to the believer. We only promise a calm, clear, affectionate holding up of the way in which the great army of the faithful, in all ages, have walked up to glory and rest.

"Nor can we promise an easy Christian life to any, save in the sense that Christ's *yoke* is easy, and the ways of wisdom ways of pleasantness. We have no new code of morals by which a bankrupt can pay off his honest debts by an oath, or stroke of the pen, or by which the rich may purchase exemption from penalties that would crush the poor. We profess to be of the old school of morals, as well as of faith.

"In these respects, therefore, our future is not an experiment. Our general system has been tried in the Church at large for ages; tried in this particular church for two centuries; tried here, under the present ministry, for half a generation; all of which past gives us future confidence in Him who is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever! Towards no other point has our personal experience and observation, as well as reading, tended with such perfect unison, as towards confidence in these principles as being the only life and success of a Christian church.

"With such an experience, and holding such principles with whatever of force my soul is capable of, you will not wonder that they do, in some form, enter into everything pertaining directly to my ministry. I could no more work without them, than I could toil without those old practical helpers — food, light, and air. I should no more dare to execute my ministry without them, than I should dare drop out a clause from a divine precept or promise which I was rehearsing to a dying sinner. At the same time, I feel more than ever before, the importance of illustrating and enforcing these old truths with freshness and ever-new power.

"We should not sleep on the discoveries of the past, as drowsy Bedouin have encamped for ages on the mounds of old Nineveh, nor rehearse them as if the mere dull rehearsal were sufficient, as the practiced papist mumbles his hundred prayers. Modern preachers of these old truths need skill, tact, variety, ardor, flexibility, learning, — almost everything, in order to keep these truths in the ascendant over the minds of this earthly, analytical, fast and skeptical generation.

"I could not overstate the importance of all these collateral graces and forces, these recent helps and modern accomplishments, to the minister who would keep solid Christianity safe from the specious insinuations of its modern, subtle enemies. Still, it is none the less these few primitive doctrines of grace, and no new philosophy or philanthropy, that are to be the staple of truth which he strives thus to present in new beauty and force.

"We are reformers, and in the literal sense of the word, *radical* reformers, *i. e.* reforming the tree from the radix upward. Therefore we put forward regeneration through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief in these old supernatural truths, as the only adequate means of such thorough and permanent reform. As to confidence in genuine Christians as being the only thorough reformers, we are as old-school as the Gospel itself, but intensely new-school as to the zeal and freshness and life with which such reform, on these old principles, should be pressed forward.

"In trying to carry out these principles, we shall endeavor to have this a 'House of God,' and not the narrow fold of mine, or ours, or of any particular class; a 'House of Prayer for all people' who shall love to come hither to pray. We shall endeavor to have these services distinctively religious and practical, never aiming to please, save as what is truly religious, in the end, is always pleasing. We expect this pulpit will never become a forum for political harangues, or a stage for the exhibition of a preacher's dramatic powers, or of his learning, or even of his piety; but a place from which to discourse calmly, earnestly, and scripturally, upon the great truths of salvation, overshadowed by the powers of the world to come.

"According as this our purpose is fulfilled, these slips will not be a place for the continuance of your worldly thoughts and feelings, changed only in form, and barely enough for pleasant variety; but they will be a place for quite a different, and far loftier train of soul-exercises; where your celestial birthright shall rise in your estimation, in comparison with the earthly; where you will catch glances at those sublime verities which the angels desire to look into; where every day of this mortal life will appear of infinite value, as a scene on which to testify piety towards God, and secure a title to the life eternal; a place, in short, where your better nature shall be aroused, and then wings given to it.

"We flatter ourselves that no well-disposed hearer shall ever have occasion to say that here he has been either neglected or over-persuaded, or that he has not been dealt honestly and fairly by, in the great business for which he came.

"And now that I am in this strain, I may further say, that in the present minister of this people, you will discover no ambition to rule in the church, to carry his own points, or have it appear that he controls all things in it, suggesting everything that results well, and having foretold everything that results unfortunately; but an honest desire to help administer its varied and difficult affairs, so as best to promote the general good. He has as little ambition, as he has ability, to awaken a

temporary admiration terminating on himself, or drawing in the floating crowd. But he does acknowledge to an ambition that consumes his life, to speak well of Christ and of his salvation; to have such an inward experience as will best fit him thus to speak, together with such an outward life as will not conflict with this great purpose; in other words, to be a genuine, experimental Christian; a candid and wise interpreter of God's Word and providence; with no assumed, and therefore no unnatural airs of authority or sanctimony; an honest, reliable, Christian man, whose word, touching the great interests of the immortal soul, can be safely trusted. A glance at the past, while it reveals much to be regretted and repented of, does yet encourage hope, that God will bless the same instrumentality for the future.

"We may here state, what it will interest some to know, namely, that in connection with its present ministry, God has added unto this church, during the fifteen years past, one hundred and seventy members. Forty-four have been taken up to the church on high, exchanging the sword for the palm. One hundred and twenty have been dismissed, — of whom nearly one hundred were set off during the last year, to constitute a new church in this village. The result is, that its present number is one hundred and sixty-four, — four less than it was at the time of my settlement, fifteen years ago.

"But after all that we have thus said of these our labors, plans, and wishes, how worthless as to the great end they all are, without the presence and help of the supernatural and Holy Spirit! How poor, how bald, how fruitless is all this material preparation and human instrumentality, in comparison with having God now arise into his rest, in such a way as to clothe his priests with salvation, and cause his saints to shout aloud for joy! All these costly labors are but an empty, lonely shell, and all these our words quite as empty a boast, unless *He* now come in — the King of Glory."

The picture of the Preacher would not be com-

plete without mention of the devotional part of Mr. Hosford's public services. Allusion will be found elsewhere in this Memorial to his prayers on special occasions, and particular mention is made of the prayer he offered at the funeral of Rev. Dr. Dimmick, of Newburyport, as one of extraordinary appropriateness, richness, and tenderness. During his last long sickness he was called upon to offer a prayer at the "Golden Wedding" of two members of his church, who were, at the same time, his nearest neighbors and warmly attached friends. The crowd was very great, and it was only with the greatest difficulty that remarks, made by different persons present, could be heard. But when Mr. Hosford arose — pale, feeble, and evidently very weak — and commenced his prayer, every voice was stilled, and the whole assembly, crowded as it was, was hushed in breathless silence.

And such a prayer as followed, as he stood with his hands extended over the heads of the venerable couple, who ever heard? Its appropriateness, its touching expressions and allusions, its intonations, its pathos, its spiritual beauty, were marvellous. In the opinion of some who heard it, it could not be surpassed by mortal lips.

The same general characteristics, though in a less striking degree, were manifest in Mr. Hosford's public petitions in the sanctuary. Says one who was long a member of his congregation, and a close observer: —

"There entered into his public petitions, as the chief

element, a nearness to the Father of spirits, gained, as no one could fail to perceive, by the most close and frequent communion. There was a blending of reverence and confidence, as of one who had seen the face of the All-Holy and Just, yet seen it reflected in the tender lineaments of the All-Merciful Saviour.

"In his forms of expression, there was no *striving* after the uncommon or original; indeed, one could hardly say anything with regard to the *words* used, because one never thought of them aside from the thoughts they conveyed. They were the perfectly transparent medium through which Faith sought and found its object.

"Besides this, one felt also Mr. Hosford's intimate knowledge of human nature, and his strong sympathies with the varied experiences of life. He knew all the springs of character, the emotions which lie so deep below the surface that one who had thought and felt less thoroughly would have failed to detect them. They who joined in his petitions, felt that he made known their wants far better than themselves could have done. And what relief it was to the overflowing heart, to find the grief, repentance, or aspiration which it knew not how to express, borne upward on the wings of his utterance. The spirit of devotion so wholly subjected to its service all the cumbrous forms of speech, that it rose, as it were, disembodied, and seemed to stand face to face with the Invisible."

CHAPTER V.

LOVE OF SCIENCE.

"Variety 's the very spice of life,
That gives it all its flavor.
. . . . . .
. . . . Philosophy, baptized
In the pure fountain of eternal love,
Has eyes indeed; and viewing all she sees
As meant to indicate a God to man,
Gives Him his praise, and forfeits not her own."

COWPER.

BESIDES his multiplied and anxious labors as a minister of Christ, and notwithstanding his almost constant feeble health, Mr. Hosford accomplished, as a student, a reader, a writer, a lecturer, and a correspondent, an amount of work truly surprising. Few pastors of the present day equal him in this respect. The number and variety and ability of his papers furnished to our dailies, weeklies, monthlies, and quarterlies, besides two interesting and valuable volumes of considerable size, is astonishing. Astronomy, geology, botany, natural scenery, music, poetry, theology, criticism of every form of error, extravagance, and folly, engaged in turn his versatile and "sharp-nibbed pen;" and one, who is for the first time made aware that he is the author of all this mass of papers, wonders how one and the same mind could have been so obviously at

home, and so really able, in each particular department.

Many of the best of these products of his pen evinced a quiet and unpretending, but enthusiastic, love of science, — a love which he himself acknowledged to be "a sort of passion." Rarely did he ramble through field or forest without finding, as if by instinct, some new or strange plant or flower, insect or stone, or to notice some new beauty in the landscape that had escaped the notice of other eyes. Though an admirer of all departments of science, he was specially fond of astronomy. Upon this subject he wrote, and delivered before the Lyceum in Haverhill, two or three lectures, which he illustrated by carefully prepared diagrams. With an ordinary spy-glass, he would often spend hours in the evening in searching for and examining the stars. When once he was able to see the moons of Jupiter and the rings of Saturn with this little glass, he sent for a neighbor to come and share in his intense delight.

Among the many subjects upon which Mr. Hosford wrote out and published his thoughts, were carefully prepared articles upon the following: "Sirius and his Companions"; "Duration of the Earth as intimated by Astronomy"; "Man's Place in Nature"; "Is Science Skeptical"; "Genesis and Geology"; "Recent Geological Changes"; "Geological and Theological Analogies"; "Scientific Association," &c., &c.

The following, from an intelligent neighbor and friend of Mr. Hosford, will be an appropriate conclusion to this brief notice of his love of science: —

"If in the choice of a profession, Mr. Hosford had selected any department of natural science, it is certain he would have distinguished himself in that department. He combined in his character and tastes all the elements requisite to success in any branch of scientific research or study. His mind was mathematically exact, logical, and ingenious. He was patient in investigation, persistent in seeking for new principles, and careful in his inferences or conclusions. No man possessed a more natural or intense love of science. His keen appreciations and perceptions were kindled into a glow whenever conversation turned upon new discoveries in geology, astronomy, or chemistry.

"Of the latter science he professed to know but little, and yet I remember with what a full appreciation he listened one evening to a description of the great discovery of spectrum analysis by Bunsen and Kirchoff. He instantly comprehended the philosophy of the new processes, and the magnitude and importance of the results attained. His inquiries made it apparent that he was familiar with many of the abstruse principles of optics and of chemical reactions.

"There was no one among my friends not specially connected with chemical science, whose society I oftener sought for conversation upon topics of that nature. And here as well as elsewhere frequent opportunities were afforded for the display of that ready wit which was so marked a trait in his character. Conversing one evening upon the importance of the element phosphorus in the human organization, it was observed that recent discoveries led to the belief that it performed a high office in the brain, that all efforts of the mind were dependent upon its oxydation in that organ; in short, it was brain-food. 'Oh, well,' then said he, 'I suppose you would advise us, talking ministers, to adopt in part a diet of *friction matches*.'

"But in the departments of geology and astronomy he was more particularly interested, and in their study he found recreation and delight. How ardently he yearned for those means and appliances which would enable him to penetrate the inter-

planetary spaces, in search of new worlds, or those cometary visitants which the unaided eye so seldom observes. And how often when weakness and disease made the hour of his departure seem near at hand, did his mind dwell upon the possibility or probability of its enlarged capacity for comprehending and understanding the physical universe when the impediment of the body was removed."

CHAPTER VI.

LOVE OF NATURE.

"And O, ye Fountains, Meadows, Hills, and Groves,
Think not of any severing of our loves!
. . . . . .
To me the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.
. . . . . .
. . . . The sounding cataract
Haunted me like a passion; the tall rock,
The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,
Their colors and their forms were then to me
An appetite, a feeling, and a love."

WORDSWORTH.

IN the notices of his childhood and childhood's home, given in a previous chapter, is seen the early development of Mr. Hosford's love of Nature. For those who knew him as a boy, it would have been easy to predict what he would be as a man in this respect. His enthusiastic taste for everything that was beautiful, and curious, and instructive in the works of God, influenced all he said and did. This could be illustrated to any extent, did the limits of this Memorial permit. Those, however, who have any sympathy with him in this taste, will readily see that, throughout this record of his life, the love of Nature was to him, in the words of his favorite Wordsworth, —

"An appetite, a feeling, and a love."

To own the hills and dales, the forests and streams that make up a landscape, and to own the landscape, are not the same. Mr. Hosford was one of those rare men who could look out upon a landscape with intense delight, and exclaim, "I own that," and of its beauties —

"Smiling say, '*My* Father made them all!'"

Doubtless his early acquaintance and associations with the green hills of his native State, and the beautiful river which is the eastern boundary of his native town, laid the foundation of much of his love of Nature as a matter of culture. But the love was innate, and would have found expression anywhere. His frequent visits to his native hills, up to the very last he ever made, were ever full of this "*appetite*," which never failed of gratification. And all his vacation-excursions and rambles elsewhere, were more or less interesting and useful to him, as he found or failed to find Nature in forms and phases to please his ever-longing eye.

It would be quite easy to multiply illustrations of this "*love*" to almost any extent, though it is not easy to make a selection from his letters and sermons, which, on the whole, may be accepted as the best that might be made.

Writing to friends who, a short time before, in the summer of 1858, had accompanied him on a visit to the White Mountains, he says: —

"I wonder if you have lived and revelled amid White Mountain scenery as much as I have since our return? I wonder if

you wish to go right back, and travel it all over again, as I do? . . . . . I have been a happy man since our return, and the reasons of it are, — the glow of health I brought back in my veins, and the great and beautiful scenes I brought back in my memory. I never had so pleasant a ten days, and never one that left on my memory such a rich deposit of materials for sweet and edifying reflections.

"I wish that your remembrances may be something like my own. . . . . I have been reading Ruskin, but do not find him so full and glowing on mountains as I had expected; but still worth the reading. And so I read along, — about the water, vegetation, and skies especially, and am now getting myself ready to go out and admire Nature scientifically and artistically. The very first cloud that shows its head above the horizon, has got to submit to examination (*a la mode!*) and be labelled cirrus, stratus, or cumulus; and then it may go on its way. And so of trees and streams. Even the solid mountains will not get off as easily as formerly, but shall sit still over their bases until I am through with them! When I am done with Nature I think I shall take up *people;* so if any body sees my opera-glass turned towards them, unless they are good-looking, they had best — *vamose!*"

In a sermon upon Luke ix. 34, 35, Mr. Hosford thus refers to these White Mountain scenes, as illustrating the clouds that hung over the Mount of Transfiguration and the transfigured Redeemer, and the vision that followed their removal: —

"A memorable Sabbath in our history was one spent in the Glen at the foot of Mt. Washington. Our fellow-worshipers were not of human mould or stature. During all the day clouds and darkness were round about the sovereign mount. The hoary head of the prince of that group was not once visible. We saw him only by the eye of faith. Oh how deep thoughts concerning him were stirred by the very fact of his

being veiled! A little before sunset the hoary summit broke through its envelope for a few minutes, and then all was mystery again. But soon a rising breeze swept the whole cloud-drapery aside, and there stood the glorious king in serene majesty and beauty. The rain had so washed the atmosphere from its impurities as to show every outline of the mountain with almost incredible distinctness; and all this majesty was then flooded in the golden rays of the setting sun. A sight it was to be remembered through life; yea, death itself cannot wipe it out of the memory, save by wiping out the very fabric of the soul. The unusual beauty of that sight was all due indirectly to the preceding clouds.

"So do dark providences screen from clear vision the benevolence of our God. So does this obscurity quicken our inquiring souls to an unusual intensity. So then do the clouds break, and give you a momentary but clear view of the paternal countenance," &c.

Referring to the same sublime scenery as seen in the winter, Mr. Hosford says: —

"It is a rare sight to stand at the foot of Mt. Washington in summer, but if less sublime and overawing, it is more pleasing and beautiful to look upon its western side in winter, during the setting of the sun, and watch the dark shadow climbing slowly up its snowy side, while the mellow sunlight, retreating toward the summit, becomes more and more beautiful by the contrast, until, crowded entirely off by the invading darkness, it is caught up like the fiery chariot of the prophet to the source of light."

In the autumn of 1859, Mr. Hosford, with others, visited the romantic region of Lake Memphremagog, from which place he wrote a series of delightful "Country Letters" for one of the Boston dailies, which will be tenderly remembered by many readers,

and which, if there were room, would be most welcome here.

The following communication, though long, is given entire, because it cannot well lose a single paragraph without injury, and because it furnishes an example in which the love of Nature in the invalid and suffering writer, shines out through the mingled wit and seriousness like "apples of gold in pictures of silver": —

"It is not our purpose to decide the grave question which the secular department of the 'Recorder' has of late been discussing, namely, whether a boat or a horse be the more desirable for a convalescent minister, but the rather to propose a third candidate for favor with the weaker brethren. I speak, as the Country Parson would say, 'concerning legs,' and from no narrow experience, — having used a pair of the same for more than forty years, — having boated more or less for more than twenty years, and having followed horsebacking until I could endure it no longer. I shall therefore speak intelligently, if I do not speak wisely and candidly, while I stand up for legs as the best means of pleasant and healthy locomotion.

"1. They are the cheapest means. 'Convalescent' tells us that a boat costs $50, and needs occasional repairs. We add that it can then be used only a part of the year. A horse costs from $100 to $300, his board another hundred per year or more, with liability of losing the whole capital by one of those horse-ails whose name is legion. Horse-flesh spends well in eating, but very fast in using. Riding is a luxury which feeble ministers can ill afford.

"But legs — you are supposed to have inherited a pair of them at least from your parents. You incur no extra expense in boarding them, for what pacifies the stomach feeds them also. They wear out slowly. Do they not generally last until we are tired of moving them? In short, they are the cheapest

locomotives known, and therein are specially suited to the condition of ministers, *i. e.*, servants. We suspect our very prudent parishioners mean more than they at first seem to, when they say to us, as they often do, — 'Just *run* in and see us any time.' They know we can afford to come any time in *that* style.

"2. They afford the largest liberty. How many different positions can 'Eques' find upon his horse to relieve or to distribute the wear and tear of riding? And will 'Convalescent' tell us how much breadth of beam for cramped knees there is in a common row-boat? But knees aside; — over how much of his parish can he row his boat? Unless he has the rare good fortune to be upon the sea-side, or the borders of a large pond, his variety of movement for to-day is this, — up-stream and then down, down-stream and then up; and to-morrow as this day, but more abundant in monotony. How long can a weak man endure this?

"Horsebacking enlarges this variety somewhat, because two roads may cross and thus make four, as rivers cannot. But who that has industriously prosecuted this sort of recreation for two or three weeks only, has not worn threadbare every highway and cross-road and lane in all the neighborhood? So that, the night before, he can entertain his sleeplessness by anticipating precisely where to-morrow his horse will walk, drink, or gallop; where the farmer's dog will bark, and the farmer's boy drop his work to stare at him; until he welcomes any novelty in the way of a stumbling of his horse or a sudden shower, and he hurries home to enter upon his diary the remarkable fact, that on this morning a rabbit or a skunk crossed the road immediately before him!

"But legs are travellers of the freest range. The convalescent can 'walk a-field,' going whithersoever his humor leads. Across the soft meadows or up the craggy cliffs; along the singing brook or into a friend's house and flower-garden. He can halt when he pleases, and as long, resting or examining more minutely, or indulging in larger discourse, as he may

elect. He can run, or loiter, or lie down to watch the silvery bubbles on the brook, or the silvery clouds in upper air, or the sweet birds, whose silvery notes fill it with joy. Then up and away homeward, or still further on, without care for any person, animal, or thing. That free and easy movement which we call a 'stroll,' when we launch out, knowing little and caring less whither we go, or where we fetch-up, travelling, as the Arabs say, 'towards God's gate,' and the corresponding rest of soul while thought strolls all abroad, laboring upon nothing, yet finding delight in everything; what luxury can equal this, to a Christian minister, worn down with overwork and over-care?

"And then the woods — the old, stately, and historic woods — the cool, mossy, flowery, and sweet-scented woods; in one part as silent as the place of graves, and in another as social as all heaven's sweet songsters can make them. 'God's first temples,' his latest and his best, in which the worshiper is both awed down and lifted up by an atmosphere of divine presence. What should skilful navigation or expert horsemanship ever know of the woods, which to go from earth without having seen and enjoyed, is to miss forever one of God's most wondrous works on earth?

"3. They are the primitive style. Legs are an ancient and honorable institution, sixteen hundred years older than the first boat, and several centuries older than the earliest record of the horse. Neither Moses nor Milton makes mention of either boat or horse in connection with Paradise. No, these inventions were sought out in less delectable places, and under the pressure of necessity. Adam was no oarsman, though four rivers flowed through his domains, and Abraham's horses bore only burdens, while he walked in princely dignity at their side. Truth is, legs may be called first principles of locomotion. We all walk as soon as we can, and climb upon others' legs when our own give out. This is the natural order, and it implies a great principle. Riding is a confession on high of our degeneracy. We admit, *ipso facto*, that we are no longer sov-

ereigns. We move on sufferance and at others' expense. Am I wide of the mark when I suggest that this may be what the wise king had in mind when he wrote for the inspired record, 'I have seen servants upon horses, and princes walking as servants upon the earth.' Certain it is that the splendid descriptions of the war-horse in Scripture are all poetical — an *ology* of the feelings, as it were, while the plain, solid prose of the Bible uniformly warns us against trust in them.

"It is in place here to cite the example of the apostles, — the first and best ministers of Christianity. Several of them owned boats at first, but they abandoned them as soon as they were converted and called. Matthew may have used a horse while he was a worldling collecting taxes, but he left it at home when he followed Christ. Paul could have commanded either horse or boat at any time, but he appears to have used only one, and that but once, and that only as he was forced on board a prisoner in chains. But all these went forth, *i. e.*, walked according to what was implied in the command 'Go.' And if tradition is reliable, they all held out, going about doing good until a violent death overtook them. Walking therefore is a primitive recreation, it favors the primitive health, and is the primitive mode of spreading the Glad Tidings. Should not 'Eques,' therefore, and 'Convalescent,' and all that growing class whom they represent, repent and do the first works; or, in words more scholastic but less scriptural 'return to first principles?'

"Some remarkable stories are told of the effect of long horseback-ridings of hundreds and even thousands of miles, and occupying two or five months. But the more remarkable thing is that strength of natural constitution and strange tenacity of life which could endure such heroic practice. Any man who has undergone all that, ought to be let alone of disease for the next fifty years.

"Seriously, we think the matter of horseback-riding for invalids has been and still is overdone. It is a popular hobby, just as meat-eschewing, and throat-swabbing, and iron-monger-

ing, and cod-liver-anointing, and whiskey-drinking have been. N. P. Willis never may know how many invalids who were descending the slope towards sunset at a slow walk, read his charming letter on this subject and followed his example, only to gallop out of life.

"Doubtless some have trusted in horses and been delivered. We know of one awkward brother whose Ichabod Crane exhibitions in this fine art not only indurated himself, but also cured of chronic dyspepsia several parishioners by administering to them a daily dose of immoderate laughter. And another of a different 'persuasion,' has been so much built up by his nine-months' experience as chaplain on horseback, that he still makes daily what appear to be cavalry charges along the streets at imaginary rebels, — the sight whereof refreshes the whole village as well as himself. But these are rare instances, and do not establish a fundamental principle like that on which we stand. While therefore one brother rejoices in his Morgan and another in his Lapstreak, let it remain the rejoicing, as it is the necessity, of the multitudinous brotherhood, that they stand upon their own legs."

The following brief extracts from Mr. Hosford's sermons will sufficiently explain themselves: —

"The members of the solar household are constantly turning aside a little from their courses, to salute fraternally a kindred orb passing near, yet no family ever dwelt together in such harmony; each member to-day still in the place it took when the morning-stars sang together, &c. They shine steadily; but oftentimes one trails his shadow over another's smiling face, and the shaded one shows his love of peace, and order, and of the general good, by holding on his way just as before."

From a sermon upon Ps. cxlv. 10, "All thy works praise thee, O Lord," &c.: —

"The water which escapes from a mountain lake comes sing-

ing down the hills, nor scorns to turn a wheel in its lively course. The product of this active force may be *paper*, — erelong printed all over, — soon matured into Bibles, perhaps. And a portion of the profits of this manufacture may support a missionary or colporteur in his labors to distribute another portion of these manufactures among the heathen, or the destitute in Christian lands.

"This stream, as it tumbles along towards its rest, singing and working by turns, praises God actively by its music and its works. The watchful sky is gladdened by the sight. But other lakes, cool, deep, and pure, are hemmed in by the everlasting hills, and thus forbidden of their Creator to praise Him in this particular way. What then? Why, obviously, *rest* there in the hollow of His hand; *keep* pure, and deep, and cool, and sweet, and peaceful, — and from their silvery surface reflect back to God a far more beautiful and perfect image of His trees, and clouds, and stars, and overarching skies than any Christian canvas or poem ever did. Praise Him by what they *are!* *Be* such, that when the glorious Creator looks upon them, He shall see the image of His own incomparable loveliness!"

Again from the same sermon: —

"The highest interest attaching to earth is not that it has lofty mountains and broad seas, prairies and cataracts, flowers and singing-birds, — in short, a countenance that speaks sweetly to a cultivated taste; but it is that a ladder reaches from it to heaven; it is that angels visit it to minister to those who are heirs of salvation; it is that the Son of God has walked upon it, talked upon it, died upon it, and made it the scene upon which a faithful probationer can win heaven. It is that it is the theatre upon which the Holy Spirit is doing His peculiar work; the place where Christian experience begins; the place from which Christian hope looks up, and from which the Christian himself is soon to rise. It is these supernatural truths which give significance to Nature."

From a sermon upon Eccl. i. 4. "One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh; but the earth abideth forever": —

"It is now some two hundred years since this immediate region was settled by Christian men. But could the first generation of those who died or were massacred here, be raised to life again, they might not be more surprised at the changes which men have wrought upon the surface, than at the entire *absence* of change in the great features of the valley. The same graceful swells of land congratulating each other across the vales; the same placid river moving on in unhurried dignity; the same daily struggle between current and tide; the same outlying ponds sending down by the same valleys their undiminished tribute to the river, — these features of the face of Nature are the same as at the beginning, only the art of man has done, as it were, some slight toilet work upon it."

The following is from a sermon preached on the annual Thanksgiving Day, in November, 1859, upon Ps. lv. 6. "And I said, Oh that I had wings like a dove, for then would I fly away and be at rest": —

"When humanity can bear its irksome load no longer, how sweetly do God's fields and woods, lakes and mountains, all so peaceful themselves, and always fresh, invite us to turn aside and rest awhile. How beautifully and tenderly does the Professor-poet express this natural religion of the soul in one of those closing hymns, in which he makes you forget the wicked things he had said in the preceding essay: —

'Who knows it not, — this dread recoil
Of weary fibres stretched with toil,
The pulse that flutters faint and low,
When summer's seething breezes blow?

'O Nature, bare thy loving breast,
And give thy child one hour of rest;
One little hour to lie unseen
Beneath thy scarf of leafy green.'

"We are cruel to ourselves, and unfaithful to our Heavenly Father, in that we confine ourselves so closely to a mode of life that is at once so unnatural and so wasting to body and spirit, as is modern life in large towns, and especially in manufacturing towns.

"We need to hear the Saviour repeating to us His counsel to the twelve, on a certain occasion: 'Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, (*i. e.* a solitary or retired place) and *rest awhile*'; and so from the busy scenes around Tiberias and Capernaum, they passed across the lake to the north-east, and there upon the slope facing the peaceful water, and where two of the evangelists are particular to mention that there was *much green grass there*, *i. e.*, that it was a sweet, verdant scene, — there they had repose, until the multitude, who had followed them on the other side of the lake, found them out."

The following brief extract is from a letter written during his weary "exile" in the "Patmos" of his last long sickness, "The Isles of Shoals": —

"With a clear sea-view around more than half the horizon, a mere line or thread of land (Cape Ann) another eighth, then a low shore for the remainder about ten miles away towards the sunset, I lie and hear the waves working away at their everlasting problem against the shores. I lie in bed and see the sun rise from the sea and dry himself; I go down to the very surf in mid-day, and there look and listen entranced until overpowered, when I lie down in some sunny nook of the rocks, and frequently sleep! The feeling when half asleep or just waking, is strange and strangely pleasant."

During the same season of loneliness and exhaustion, Mr. Hosford wrote the following upon "The Afflicted Bird." Another article upon "God's Robins," written in the same tender strain, and nearly at the same time, will be found, for reasons that are obvious, in

another chapter. The article here given illustrates his habit of close observation, and his love of Nature in another of its many phases. It is charming in itself, and doubly interesting from the fact that it is one of the last things he ever wrote: —

"I once saw a little straw-colored bird, dead and floating upon the still water among the willows of a meadow. Whether she had died of slow disease, or by violence from some heartless boy, or had fallen from her perch while asleep by some heart disease, it matters not for our present purpose. Sufficient for us now that she was dead. Never again would those silken feathers be dressed as tidily as she was wont to dress them; never again would that little throat warble sweet melodies as it used to do. As to this life, she was utterly and hopelessly dead. I stopped to bewail her untimely fate, but soon discovered that I was not chief mourner on the occasion. Her stricken mate was hopping among the osiers above, chirping sadly, and at brief intervals descending to lay hold of his dead with his tiny beak, trying to lift her up into sunshine and life. Again and again did he renew this sorrowful but vain attempt, until I could watch him no longer; and I turned away, leaving him tugging at his melancholy task.

"What an affecting mimicry of human grief over the dead, and of the poor attempts of the human heart to bring its lost beloved back to life again! How natural for us to go groping and weeping about the house whose light went out, and whose music was hushed when the lovely one departed, — again and again calling him by name, until wearied with repeating the mournful experiment; and yet clinging to it still with a tenacity of a diseased brain and a broken heart! How natural to keep going to the grave to weep there; and while we weep to call to the sleeper to awake and give us one token of recognition, — only one slight token that he is conscious and happy, that our sinking hearts may be strengthened to wait patiently till their own change come! Ah, that is not the way for us to find for

our bruised spirits the resurrection and the life. Our friend's grave is not yet the gate of heaven for us. We should think upward and not earthward. We should not keep delving into the cold, dark ground, as if to recover the corruptible body, but spread our wings, and away whither the spirit of our beloved dead has gone. We should not waste what little of strength our great affliction has left us by lifting away hopelessly at that cold, inert, and heavy body of death, but leave that to the care of the angels until the resurrection morning; and thus give our unladen heart the opportunity of seizing and appropriating to its own consolation, the marvellous truths which the Gospel offers us as believers in Him who was dead and is alive again. Let the example of this poor bird warn us, as that of the robin and the sparrow should win us."

CHAPTER VII.

LOVE OF MUSIC.

"Thou needest not ask of me
What this strong music of the soul may be, —
What and wherein it doth exist,
This light, this glory, this fair luminous mist,
This beautiful and beauty-making power."

COLERIDGE.

IT is said of Legh Richmond that, while he cultivated music as a science, he "enjoyed it with the ardor of an enthusiast." This remark equally applies to Mr. Hosford, who, in spirit and tastes, strongly resembled Richmond. With a heart alive to everything fair and beautiful, he was an admirer of the fine arts, not less than of Nature. It may truly be said of him: —

"Through every pulse the music stole,
And held sublime communion with the soul."

Concerning the early development of his taste for music, his sister writes: —

"Our father delighted to hum out the day in a good old Christian hymn. Often the little ones climbed up to hear him sing 'Thousands of thousands.' Our mother sang plaintive airs at her little wheel and loom, and her simple ballads nourished our growth in innocence. This was our small stock, and to this each child in turn contributed. The Æolian came

to charm us first of all. Father, mother, and little heads, one above another, stood near the low window, dumb, as it wailed so tender, or broke into shrieks so wild. Our child of song played little airs when very young, without thought or effort. A piano of almost human tone was a shrine to which he turned.

"I have never seen one drink in music so deeply, and so entirely shun its dissipations. This same culture he craved for his children, and so appropriated a portion of the winter evenings, spent in the country, to sacred family music. These young children can never outlive the remembrance of those hours, or how their father sang in clear treble tones, as few men can sing, 'Brother, though from yonder sky.' The airs he selected were tender, melancholy, and executed with great finish, and beauty of expression.

"Such as his style was, he had from the beginning. While listening to his reveries, my own soul has swelled to the topmost endurance. I felt I stood beside the dying, saw the winding up of life, its avenues closed one by one, then the snapping of the brittle thread. Oh! the pent up grief which rolls over me when, musing and alone, I catch from some careless one a sweet strain of music, first heard from hands now mouldering in dust!"

Year after year, it was Mr. Hosford's habit to attend the Concerts and Oratorios in Boston; and great was his disappointment when, for any reason, he was prevented from securing this gratification. During the performance and for some time subsequently, he seemed to be borne, as upon wings, to a height of ecstasy which is rarely attained even by professional amateurs.

November 16, 1849, he wrote: —

"Sadly grieved to-ngiht to read in papers that no evening tickets would be sold for a series of Concerts in Boston, some

of which I had ardently hoped to attend. Wondered again if it is *possible* for me to feel an interest in religious duties and professional labor, which would compare with my *relish* for good music. Not that I would be unclothed of this profession, but clothed upon with such a spirit as would make me relish the calling. No doubt some men, who have no special taste for such matters as music, may find their *taste* as well gratified in labors of benevolence; but is it so with him who knows the 'concord of sweet sounds?'"

Mr. Hosford published numerous articles upon sacred music. In one of these, which had a special reference to certain *un*musical criticisms of a musical performance, he wrote: —

"Good music is to some extent a relative thing, *i. e.* what is good to one, is not as good to another; and yet it is as well settled what good music is, as what good poetry or painting is. That is good music which they who have made music their study generally admire; not that which they admired in their 'natural and unsophisticated state,' but in their mature and cultivated state. They studied the art; they changed their tastes by study; they considered the change an improvement, and the musical world has sustained their judgment. Instead, therefore, of having our friends rest satisfied with their natural and simpler likings in this matter, we would have them, by all possible and proper means, elevate their primitive and unsophisticated tastes, so as to enjoy the 'fine renderings' of the 'sublimer compositions' of the great masters in this art."

Mr. Hosford's intense enjoyment of music increased with increasing years. After he became a decided invalid, he wrote from Orford, N. H.: —

"I see in to-day's paper a notice of the 'Messiah.' Oh, how homesick this makes me! Shall I ever again feel the religious

power of that composition, — one of the greatest of all human works?"

Again: —

"Beethoven's Minor Chords, so akin to some of Tennyson's best thoughts, have been haunting me to-day."

Again: —

"Heard four Germans play last night, — music exquisite! It filled my eyes with tears, and my soul with delight."

Again: —

"Heard St. Paul, by Mendelssohn, rehearsed, — a treat long to be remembered."

Again: —

"I am sure I have struck at the very soul of music. No man could describe, — I could not myself, — its effect on my highest culture, intellectual and religious. All I can say is, that I have been permitted to enter the 'Holy of holies' in this respect, for which I give most humble and hearty thanks. The Bible gives every intimation that music will in some way form a part of the worship of heaven. So this preparation of soul will not be lost."

To a friend, with whom he was conversing during his last sickness, he said: —

"Much of what you call the tenderness and pathos of my character is due to the effect of music. . . . . There is a gulf which no man can measure, between *my* appreciation of music, and that of most men. I have always *felt* it, but *said* nothing."

Again, he said: —

"To such as have a keen relish for it, there is none other earthly refreshment that is at once so stimulating and soothing.

From Saul and Luther, the evil spirit was not so much expelled by music, as their souls were by music ravished away out of his reach; and so does it always lift up and bear away, clear out of the reach of earthly thought, the soul of one that has the gift of hearing."

These expressions and illustrations of Mr. Hosford's enthusiastic love of music could be multiplied, and will occasionally appear as we follow him along the path of life. And we who now linger behind and gaze upward after him, can hardly think it too much to believe of one who, with his heart so attuned to praise, sang so sweetly and loved music so intensely on earth, that he now sings more sweetly than others, —

> "With those just spirits that wear victorious palms,
> Hymns devout and holy psalms,
> *Singing everlastingly.*"

It is proper to add here that Mr. Hosford's love of poetry, though perhaps less demonstrative, was not less genuine and enthusiastic than his love of music. It was ever a delight to him that the

> "Sphere-born, harmonious sisters, Voice and Verse,"

could "*wed* their divine sounds." His mind was essentially poetic, and, had he given his pen to the Muse often, as he did occasionally, there is no doubt he would have attracted the public notice and applause, even more generally than he did as a writer of prose. He was particularly fond of some of the older English poets. Their quaintness and original freshness were a source of inexhaustible pleasure. Henry Vaughan was a special favorite, and, in a published article entitled

"Vaughan and his Debtors," he contended that it was from the quaint but genuine and original old poet Wordsworth borrowed some of his finest and freshest thoughts, of which the article gives examples.

In looking over Mr. Hosford's manuscripts and note-books, one can hardly fail to be struck with the fact that he is everywhere communing with the poet. Charming poetic thoughts, allusions, and quotations abound. Into many of his best sermons are introduced, more commonly at the close, hymns or other quotations of poetry, which, besides finely illustrating the subject of the sermon, are gems in themselves. Many of these will be recognized by his hearers and intimate friends, in this Memorial.

CHAPTER VIII.

LOVE OF COUNTRY.

"Yet, my beloved country, I partake
Of kindred agitations for thy sake;
Thou, too, dost visit oft my midnight dream;
Thy glory meets me with the earliest beam
Of light, which tells that morning is awake.
If aught impair thy beauty or destroy,
Or but forebode destruction, I deplore
With filial love the sad vicissitude."

WORDSWORTH.

WHEN the late war commenced, Mr. Hosford's health had already been seriously undermined. This fact, together with his acute nervous sensibility and shrinking from public notoriety, restrained him in a measure from outward demonstrations of the patriotic feeling which stirred his heart. He was not an indifferent spectator of his country's peril and struggle. In private his expressions of interest were strong and true. He had, before this culmination of the power of the oppressor, recorded his deep sense of the evils of slavery, and his apprehension of God's judgments upon the land on account of it. Referring to a harrowing description of the wrongs of the slave, he wrote: —

"I already knew enough of slavery to convince me that every important, painful incident narrated, could be matched and perhaps *over*-matched by reality. My intellect, my judgment was already wholly against the evil. I knew it capable of all the miseries portrayed, but now my heart is moved."

With these feelings, Mr. Hosford gave himself to daily and special prayer for the interposition of Heaven, not knowing exactly what else he could do, and, at the same time, cordially responding to the sentiment subsequently so happily expressed by one of his favorite poets, — "the poet of our valley": —

"I see the wrong that round me lies,
I feel the guilt within;
I hear, with groans and travail-cries,
The world confess its sin:

"Yet in the maddening maze of things,
And tossed by storm and flood,
To one fixed star my spirit clings:
I know that God is good!"

Conservative by nature and by principle, Mr. Hosford was never rash nor unchristian in his language on any subject. His well-considered words of opposition to slavery, and of alarm at its encroachments, were, therefore, the more weighty when they came.

From an admirable sermon, preached to his own people soon after the war began, and eminently worthy of being published entire, are extracted the following paragraphs: —

"'When thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.' Practical righteousness is the doing of what is right, just. God's judgments, therefore, should teach us justice. . . .

"The enormous outrages (upon the eternal and immutable principles of justice) which this war has brought out in the South, the plundering of Government property, and repudiating Northern debts, will recall our attention to the value of this quality of strict justice in the business-world.

"We were becoming lax, too, in political justice. . . . Individuals and parties kept silence, or carefully measured their words, when they should have lifted up their voice as a trumpet.

"Think you that a National Congress, for one generation at least, will *again* sit and listen as patiently to the bold avowals of Treason, as they did for three months last winter? Then, with other things to think of, party and personal, they were obtuse to this enormous crime; but now they see it; and have at last decreed its merited penalty, and, we trust, will, in due time, execute it.

"And so we now see the ripe fruits of our loose notions, and from them reason back to the guilt of the first sowing. Our knowledge comes late, but not too late to save us from perdition.

"The sense of right may be forgotten in the hot pursuit of selfish interest; it may be blinded awhile by partisan zeal; it may be, for a season, smothered or trampled into silence by unscrupulous violence; but it still lives, for the immortal life of God is in it, and, erelong, He will give it a resurrection. It may be patient, and forgiving of abuse, waiting long in hope that better counsels will prevail; but, beyond a certain point, it will rise in its indignation, and then, no interest or even passion can stand in its way, for it moves as if it bore a solemn commission from the Highest.

"It is the sense of injured justice, — of justice outraged in secret, and then openly; outraged long, and all the more as it was forbearing towards its injurers, — it is this which has made a 'North which no *political* combination could ever make; this that has stirred the North so deeply, demolishing old party lines, fusing hereditary animosities, opening purses

and vaults, and literally choking the highways to our Capital with troops panting for the sacrifice. It is the spirit of '76 suited to the necessities of '61, — the power which put down foreign tyranny now putting down domestic anarchy.

"'Thrice is he armed who hath his quarrel just.'

"Could I get the ear of all our soldiery to-day, I would try to invigorate both body and soul by these considerations of eternal justice.

"In order to make them efficient in the highest degree, and patient to the end, I would advise them to clear the mind of all other considerations, in order that it may be occupied and controlled by this alone, — 'Justice in our land has been trifled with, insulted, trampled upon, and from the dust cries unto us for vengeance.' I would have them feel that they are called out, not so much to recover stolen goods, or protect our Capital, or back up an Administration, or save us the mortification of defeat, or gratify the personal desire of revenge, as to serve the holy ends of justice; to set up again dethroned law and order, which is righteousness in the high places of our nation; to represent to the nation and to the world the majesty of an eternally righteous principle in contrast with the ruthless sectional ambition that has assailed it.

"Much as I desire victory for our arms, it would lose much of its desirableness in my mind, did I not anticipate it as victory for righteous principle as expressed in our Constitution and our Union, in distinction from the doctrine of State Rights, (the root of all this difficulty,) which is, at least, the doctrine of the petted younger son, who will have his own way regardless of the welfare of the whole household in which he had been brought up. . . .

"Treachery to such a Government and Constitution as ours, because dissatisfied with the principles or proceedings of a party, is crime, if any thing touching government can be crime, and if there be any such thing as justice, it must be duty to visit that crime with penalty. War is a strange method for

deciding the righteousness of a question; and yet, to this nineteenth century of our blessed Lord, we have discovered no method more satisfactory. It is at the best an awful scourge, and no man should ever lift hand or voice to it without a clear conviction that his cause is just. But when he *has* such a conviction, growing out of the fact that he cannot otherwise get justice at the hands of man, and so carries his case before the higher tribunal of the God of Battles, — doing this for the sake of the cause of endangered righteousness, — then the appeal to arms becomes a sublime moral act, and the prosecution of it a religious duty, and so a means of grace.

"Thus the great men of our Revolution accepted the dreadful alternative forced upon them, and, by such principles secured the help of God, the just. . . .

"I am quite certain that no government ever had a more just cause for armed resistance than ours now, and therefore I believe it would be better for us to fight and die failing, than to make no attempt to restore justice and liberty. The attempt to do this may last long, but it is better to fight indefinitely, even unto death, than to settle down in a peace whose conditions violate our holiest notions of righteousness. We do not desire a peace whose conditions will unman us before God and our own consciences. Better an endless war, whose principles will be constantly strengthening the souls of those who live and die in it. . . .

"Taking the race as it is, liberty can be bought and kept only with the price of blood; and it is worth the price. Not one drop of the blood of our Revolution was wasted. Seventy-nine years of peace are worth a seven years war."

Such were the views and feelings in relation to his country's peril and duty which Mr. Hosford cherished, only with increasing intensity, to the day of his death. More than two years after preaching the sermon from which the foregoing extracts have been made, and when

he was sinking beneath the accumulating pressure of disease, he wrote and published the following: —

"The most fearful stage in the progress of the war is now at our doors. It is generally understood that a draft of 300,000, more or less, is soon to be made. Hitherto our immense army has been sustained by volunteers, including in that term those few whose voluntary powers needed the quickening influence of a bounty. Thus far, no compulsion, no violent sundering of families, no reluctant obedience to an iron edict, which would have been gladly avoided. The community has given up only those who, with some inconvenience, could be spared. But now the inexorable ploughshare must drive through the pleasantest households, tearing up the most delicate growths indiscriminately; and it will be no easy matter to evade this result, as aforetime, by kind substitutes, for they will need to answer for themselves. A draft is the most terrible feature of any war. Much more then will it be more terrible than aught which New England has yet seen of this war. But what of all this? First, it will test our patriotism, which hitherto has been subjected to no thorough test. It is mortifying to think how selfish and mixed, at best, much of that so-called patriotism has been. Love of adventure, and thirst for fame, will account for much of what we have done on the field, and love of money for much of what those at home have done to encourage those on the field. As yet, the iron of personal sacrifice and personal suffering has entered into the souls of but few. For the most part, New England has wrought never more prosperously, and never more joyously, and slept never more peacefully, than during these last two years. We have suffered nothing in comparison with what our fathers suffered, and less than nothing in comparison with what the Hollanders suffered to gain their independence.

"No doubt we have genuine patriotism, but it has not yet been proved. Heroism has lain slumbering in many a loyal bosom for want of opportunity. Now such test and such op-

portunity is at hand. When every family of three males shall have sent one to the war, and one in every three of these shall have received back its one dead, and all other families shall see that they have escaped this dire affliction only by a special grace, and so shall make the sufferers' case their own, then may our patriotism be said to have been tested; and if to all this they promptly say, 'Even so; it is only our duty to God, to liberty, and to posterity; the stake is worth all this and more; nothing that remains shall be too dear to lay down for that stake,' then may that patriotism be said to be proved. Is not such a result greatly to be desired? Are we not all conscious that we have been ignorant and superficial in our patriotism, even when we tried our best? It was a new virtue to us, and in regard to it we blundered in our haste as we did in regard to the most direct road for an army to Richmond. We are not sure but we have learned this virtue as rapidly as we learn any thing valuable; but the process has been slow, and costly, and painful. The next step in the dire process of our training promises to teach us what remains to be learned as to the quality and the value of this sterling virtue. Let us gird ourselves manfully for the trial. We are unworthy of liberty, we are unworthy of our ancestry, we are unworthy of God's providence in our history, if we murmur or timidly shrink from the trial. Secondly, it may test our piety. Fearful as it is, can we bow to it trustingly, as to a providential movement? Can we still say, 'God reigns, let the nation rejoice; He reigns in and over our President and Cabinet; let the people tremble?' Can we, amid these 'terrible things in righteousness,' hold our hearts calm and even in their trust in Him? Those hearts will be fearfully agitated, perhaps deeply lacerated; but will such deep experiences only subsoil them so that they shall bear a richer harvest of trust, and love, and obedience?

"Oh, how difficult a thing it is to adjust our relation to God so as to know that it is right. How often do we think we are right, when a deeper, subsequent experience, proves us to have been far astray! Two years ago we all had our thoughts about

the war, and these we rehearsed to God with great freedom and ability! Now we see how mixed and shallow those thoughts were, and why, consequently, they moved God so little. By the painful and humiliating experiences of two years He has been leading us down into the recesses of our own spirits, in order that we might get nearer up to Him. The approaching discipline will be severest of all. If we improve it well, may we not expect it will be the most useful of all, and the last?

"One word more. It is our private opinion that no man can properly honor the God of our nation who thinks and speaks hard things of the Administration whom that God has providentially placed in power, and then led along by a way which themselves did not know, until this severe measure is a necessity. Our theology is not nice enough to discriminate between God's providence over our land, and the Administration whom that providence has exalted to power; between loyalty to the Constitution and loyalty to rulers constitutionally elected. In our judgment, therefore, any thoughtful Christian man who cannot conscientiously and cordially pray that God may bless the measures which the Administration has adopted for the securing of union and peace, would do well to reëxamine both his patriotism and his piety."

These utterances have the true ring of independent Christian patriotism. They would have done no dishonor to the year '76. They do not disgrace

"The tongue
That Shakspeare spake, the faith and morals
Which Milton held."

CHAPTER IX.

LOVE OF SATIRE.

"And gentlest spirits oft, with sportive mien,
Do scatter Attic salt and satire keen ;
Touch to the quick the shrinking nerves of wrong,
Yet win their sympathy with Humor's song."

ANON.

AN attempt to cull out from their connections in Mr. Hosford's letters and newspaper articles, the examples of his wit and satire, would be like an attempt to gather up for public exhibition the dew-drops that sparkle in the morning sun. A large portion of his letters are full of the keenest and most delicate, yet evidently the most unstudied and natural humor; but, generally, it is so associated with other strains, and so related to facts of a private or personal character, that the necessary explanations of it, if the examples were given, would occupy more room than can here be afforded. Ever remarkably free from any disposition wantonly to wound the feelings even of those from whose opinions or conduct his own most widely differed, this play of his thoughts and expressions was obviously almost as irresistible as an instinct. It was what his little boy truly characterized as "*papa's funniness*," —a keen sense of the ludicrous joined to an irrepres-

sible prompting to expose wickedness, error, and folly, in terms of vivid and merited severity. When thus directed to those whom Pope so forcibly called —

. . . . . "Hectors,
Thieves, supercargoes, sharpers, and directors,"

in the sphere of business, theology, religion, manners or morals, it was sometimes withering. But aside from its application to those whom, in his inmost soul *he felt to be wrong*, he never employed it, and he could honestly adopt the words of Pope again: —

"Curst be the verse, how well soe'er it flow,
That tends to make one worthy man my foe."

The reader of this Memorial will not fail often to notice examples of humor and satire in Mr. Hosford's letters. But as specimens of the keener sort, extracts from other productions of his pen will here be given.

The following is the first of his series of articles upon "Great Sermons," published in the "Boston Recorder" in 1857: —

"GREAT SERMONS.

"What are they? I mean by them, just now, such as require a great effort to prepare and deliver them; which make a great impression upon both preacher and hearer; and which are generally great failures. Their whole history is greatness long-drawn-out. The Scriptures are now searched, if never before, for a striking text, whose most striking feature, thus applied, may be a wretched pun. Then Common-Place Books of Poetry, Hand-Books of Proverbs, and a Concordance of Shakspeare, are consulted and applied. The old translators are also exhumed for the sake of some quaint version of the text, or for some fanciful rendering of it, which affords the preacher a good opportunity of amending the version. Then follows the

great principle, made startling by a paradoxical form of statement. This great principle is now unfolded, garnished, and applied, in a style which rises in grandeur as the excitement of the composer rises, under the stimulus of his own oratory, night sweats, strong tea, and the approaching Sabbath, until that day arrives; which, we pray, may be pleasant enough to warrant the delivery of one of his 'great efforts.' His people, who remember the many dull Sabbaths preceding, seem to have an instinct that something unusual will occur to-day, and so they shoal out, saying one to another, with a sly wink and nod, 'Guess our moon fulls to-day. Mighty new and thin along back.' Their guesses at truths are sometimes wider of the mark than to-day; for see, the coming event casts its shadow before. The preacher, conscious of power hidden in his pocket, walks very slowly and awkwardly up the pulpit stairs, throwing off his cloak, and shoving his Bible about, as if he were saying, 'I can afford to despise small things to-day.' The long prayer in due time is disposed of, after having taken occasion in the course of it to remind his audience of the *general* principle that preaching is foolishness, and preachers poor and feeble creatures. His long, cool introduction is now read, in a calm, subdued voice, as a sort of foil to the rush he is preparing to make. Ere long he straightens up, and suffers the orator to gleam out for a moment, through the minister. A great thought has dawned upon his mind; and like a giant refreshed with new wine, he pants for some grand achievement, and must do it, or explode. But he prudently restrains himself now, knowing that his hour has not fully come. The audience is not yet ripe. So he exercises his power by *keeping* cool, and holding in, as Wellington did his generalship, till almost sunset, at Waterloo. But as time moves on, the pulse throbs harder, the veins stand out on the temples, the brain heaves, and the imagination glows, while this inward excitement expresses and relieves itself by fuller tones and a loftier gesticulation. His people, accustomed to these periodical ecstasies, know what is expected of them in

the premises. They have learned to predict the exact moment of climax, and so begin to brace themselves, and hold their breath, at the right moment precisely. The grand consummation comes just as expected, only it is a *little* more tremendous than ever. They bear it, however, like good martyrs accustomed to the fire, and then recover themselves by sitting back into their seats, taking a long breath, and exchanging glances of satisfaction. And as they leave, they receive from the trembling hands of their exhausted minister, who is now baptized, in his own perspiration at least, a parting benediction, whose spirit is, 'Now my *dear* people, do keep calm, I beseech you, until you are fairly out of the house.' And they have respect unto the cry of the needy! But, in truth, the sermon did make a great sensation. By universal acclaim it was 'most a splendid production.' It was obvious to all that it was a 'great *effurt*.' Few had ever heard it surpassed; and some said they felt now as if they never wanted to hear another sermon. Even all the sinners in the congregation praised it with a loud voice; for not one of them was sent away maimed, or dumb, or in bad humor with himself. Only one solitary unfortunate was badly injured for the time, and he, by its recoil. The big gun did kick badly as it went off; for which rebound the gunner had forgotten to make his calculations. The over-worked man did little, all the next week, but walk wearily around, as much as to say, 'You don't expect any thing more of me *this* week.' He even talked of going to the city to have some private conference with a publisher there, and to restore 'tone' to his nervous system; but as no one expressed his solid admiration of the great sermon by proposing to pay his fare, he concluded that it was the will of Providence that he should perfect his right to join the noble army of the martyrs by staying and suffering for his well-doing.

'Time cuts down all, both great and small.'

This inexorable Primer Law makes no exception in favor of great sermons. The tempest of enthusiasm which it awakened

lulled away in proportion as the writer recovered the energy which this 'great effurt' had sucked out of his soul and body. His people naturally became less careful to remember it, as they were drawing nearer the time when they might expect another great sermon, — *should the weather prove favorable.* They were nearer the coming full moon, and so looked not mournfully to the past. Still that sermon was quite an epoch in the parish. Other events crystallized around it. Such a thing happened, it was said, so long before, or after, the great sermon; or, fortunately, on the self-same day. A child born on that auspicious morn, was christened, four weeks afterwards, with the name ECCLESIASTES, in honor of the great occasion. And for a long time all other discourses in that pulpit were tried by this exalted standard: 'A good sermon, but not one of his happiest efforts.' 'All well enough, only I kept thinking of that magnificent discourse.' And during the commonplace Gospel discourses which followed for a month, the hearers of this great sermon entertained themselves by imagining the colloquy which would transpire, should the stones out of the walls, and the beams out of the timbers, of this favored house, only speak out their impressions of that grand occasion.

In this land of light and privilege great sermons are more numerous than most rare things. Not so numerous, however, but we know their localities, as well as we know the whereabouts of the White Mountains, or of the Great Lakes.

Brother A. has a splendid Chalmeric, Astronomical Discourse, somewhat nebulous it is true, but only so because so lofty. Those who have examined it closely, on its annual return, say that its fan-shaped tail is gradually condensing around its head. Brother B. has a famous one upon the Lily, familiarly called 'The Lily-white Sermon.' Its sweet meadowy perfume lingers in many a grateful memory. Brother C. has a terrific onslaught upon the scamp, Judas, which will almost make a bald man's hair stand on end. Brother D. has laid himself out upon Absalom, or the sleek sinner; but he never preaches it abroad without first consulting the minister of the

parish. Dr. E.'s 'great effurt' is a Discourse *of* the Relations of Learning and Religion. This able argument justifies Colleges, and an educated ministry; puts Genesis and Geology in their proper places; and, wherever repeated, is called as good as new, although it has been in print for three years. Dr. F. has laid out his strength upon the true doctrine of the Logos; in which the most learned of the Greek and Latin fathers are summoned to bear witness, in their own tongues, to the truth of John. All the Symbols of the Church, unimpaired by translations, also give in their testimony to the same effect. Dr. G.'s ability has found relief in a Discourse upon the Dignities and Duties of the Christian Citizen under an unchristian Government, being a triumphant reconciliation of the higher and the lower laws. And Brother F.'s *chef d'œuvre* is 'The Fading Leaf;' which when delivered in that pensive season in which it was conceived, and when illustrated as it then can be by a veritable 'sere and yellow leaf' held up to view, is exceedingly affecting! It makes one sigh to die in Autumn, when he may lay this poor mortality down amid the sympathies of Nature, expiring all around him! There is also, in a remote part of this country, as we have heard, by distant reverberations, a great sermon on the Believer-Hero; another smasher upon Stormy Sundays; another quite smart affair called the Crooked-stick Sermon; one upon 'Memory in Hell, — the Worm without End'; and the last one reported is upon the three great, similar, silent sister forces of the Moral Universe, namely, Light, Life, and Love. The praise of these sermons is in all the churches. We recognize them, when we cross their path, as easily as President Hitchcock does the huge tracks of his geological turkeys. Whether heard at Saratoga, at Newport, in Boston, or in Brooklyn, or in any small intermediate place, where the authors are detained by snow-storms, or lie becalmed in vacation, they are ever the same, — always and everywhere great. They *keep* remarkably well. They are greatness *preserved;* the solid pemmican of thought, warranted good for all latitudes. Well planned vacations and

exchanges, in due time, bring them around to all the prominent Ecclesiastical Platforms in this part of the country. You might call them Pulpit Revolvers, or Circulating Decimals, according as your taste is martial or arithmetical. Supplying Committees of our large and influential churches understand this matter, and take advantage of it. 'We are, in the providence of God, without a pastor, and know not where to look! Pray can you not help us to a supply on the next Sabbath, either yourself or by exchange?' — which is readily understood to mean, 'Come, now, fire us your big gun.' And so it happens that almost all the 'larger and more important churches' in New England have been the objects upon which these 'great effurts' have terminated. Now there is a sense in which these gigantic products are providential, for they seem to be quite essential in the present state of things. For surely no discreet man would presume to candidate in any of our large churches unless he had one or more of such sermons; any more than the Committee would presume to ask him, without knowing that he had them. Hence, without such discourses, ecclesiastical matters in high places would suffer a dire stagnation. But for these sermons many of our first-class congregations would have to remain widowed as to a minister; and many of our first-class ministers would never have fortitude to appear as preachers, except before their own, or other small country congregations. Hence we consider these 'great effurts' as in a sense providential, prepared beforehand to meet great emergencies.

"But the minister is dying of these great sermons. They absorb his time, energy, and piety, like sponges. They bleed him like vampires; they bleach and reduce him like fevers. They require a preternatural state of mental and bodily excitation; and the penalty is a *subter*-natural state of the same. They leave him all flabby from exhaustion; when the vultures dyspepsia and bronchitis improve their opportunity, and his only remedy is a voyage to Europe. They are also most discouraging accomplishments; for when he once gets a taste for

them, he becomes sick of all his other preparations, which, from the nature of the case, must be the more numerous. True enough, it is very exhilarating to him to fire a tremendous broadside once in a while, and to listen entranced while echoing hills prolong the sound; but it is no less disheartening to him to be compelled to regard all his intermediate discourses as only pocket-pistols, — '*good* sermons, — proper enough for a Preparatory Lecture, or a rainy day.' How can he, who has spoken to his hearers as with the trump of an angel, condescend to talk like common men, *and preserve a proper self-respect?*

"These great sermons ruin others besides those who deliver them. Many a good brother has been discouraged quite out of the ministry, because he could not thunder like one of these orthodox sons of Jupiter; and many a feeble, but conscientious brother has, like the ambitious frog in the fable, fallen a martyr to his zeal, by bravely trying to expand his narrow wind-chest up to the capacity of some 'Rouser.'

"And some who are guiltless of this 'towering sin,' and have therefore avoided this sad catastrophe, have yet, by the same process of inflation, so lowered their specific gravity, as to float up and away into the very clouds. Their enraptured hearers see but little of them, after they cut loose from the fastenings of their text; but still they are all ears, as entranced poets are when listening to the 'viewless song' of the ever-circling, ever-soaring skylark. These aërial navigators, however, generally manage to get back to *terra firma* in season to assure their admirers that they are not hurt in the least; and to give their benediction for their truly devout and upturned attention to their very humble essay upon the skies.

"It has seemed to us that our own denomination, 'by the force of circumstances,' are sinners above all other evangelical denominations in this respect. The ambition of the Episcopalian, if he has any, is cramped by his Liturgy. That is fitted, and was doubtless intended, to make the sermon a secondary part of worship. And it has done its work admirably.

Great sermons in *the* Church are as much out of place as ships of war in a canal. The Methodist, in his primitive state, has too much zeal, and too little learning, to be the subject of such an ambition. The soil of the circuit is not deep enough for that gorgeous, sun-seeking plant. The Old School Presbyterians have less of it than we, because, with them, a minister's standing depends less upon his pulpit demonstrations, than upon his ecclesiastical generalship, or his power in debate before the Assembly. The more cultivated of the Baptists are beginning to show this elegant accomplishment; but Dr. Wayland protests aloud that it is only an exotic, brought into that purest and most apostolic church by a vicious imitation of more worldly and fashionable denominations; and he zealously exhorts all his brethren to repent of this their great wickedness, and do their first works.

"But Unitarians and Universalists are ahead of us still. They bid fair to run this idea into the ground. They live upon great occasions, as the Esquimaux upon the occasional walrus. A war, a Nebraska bill, the death of a wealthy merchant, a great storm, a great eclipse, a great fire, or a great celebration; — these are godsends to them. They are as new revelations from Heaven to them in their lowly estate. Their powers are not stirred by ordinary Gospel themes; their thunder reverberates only to these great occasions; and hence obese toads are not more plenteous after a summer shower, than plethoric sermons from these denominations are upon the heels of great occasions. *The spiritual condition of these denominations shows the legitimate and ripe results of this false taste in regard to preaching. They foreshow us what we also may expect to be, when great sermons become our highest ambition and our daily food.*

"CECIL."

If our limits permitted, such articles as those entitled "Smelling Committees," "Raising the Terms of Communion; How I and the Deacon did it," "One Idea, and What it can Do," and others of sim-

ilar character, which many readers of the "Boston Recorder" remember well, would admirably illustrate Mr. Hosford's rare ability as a satirist.

In March and June, 1859, and January, 1860, Mr. Hosford published three articles, the first in the "Boston Courier," and the second and third in the "Boston Recorder," which the readers of the "Atlantic Monthly," in years past, would have no difficulty in understanding, and, if orthodox, in appreciating and enjoying. They were entitled "The Professor's Opinion of the Bible and the Clergy," "A New Professor in Old Theology," and "The Professor at the Breakfast-Table," over the signatures, respectively, "Levi," "Cecil," and "Ben-Levi." One only of the three can be here introduced: —

"A NEW PROFESSOR IN OLD THEOLOGY.

"Some hard things have been written, and many more thought, about the theology of the Professor, in the 'Atlantic Monthly.' Perhaps these things have been uncharitable and hasty. A candid analysis of his words may show that the substratum of his mind is still true to his early training. True it is, that when provoked by harsh criticism, or when elevated to a chair, at a denominational festival, where he must express and defend a liberal faith, or seem ungrateful to his constituents, he has said some tart, and even vulgar things, about the Orthodox faith; but what are his unstudied sentiments on this point? What does the poet and the man believe? What says his moral childhood when it gets a chance to lisp sweetly through the philosophies of his later years? In other words, what is the theology of his heart, and does this differ, so alarmingly, from the standards?

"He says it is a great question, what is going to become of us all. We, too, call it *the* great question, and ask some other close questions about the profit that accrues from losing this interest; only the essayist is apparently not quite so much in earnest as we are about it, and certainly is less anxious than the turnkey at Philippi was. But experiences differ in intensity. We have different temperaments and modes of expressing them. Even poets are not equally sensitive in every direction. Truth rejoices in variety, — in many changes of raiment.

"Besides, to this grave question, which the Professor cannot discuss seriously in a journal 'devoted to Art, Literature, and Politics,' and much less at a dinner-table of personal friends, who would consider it quite vulgar to be exercised by any such anxieties, he gives answer by a parable, setting the truth in exquisite verse. Hear thou 'the lesson for the day' in the parable of —

'THE TWO STREAMS.

'Behold the rocky wall
That down its sloping sides
Pours the swift rain-drops, blending as they fall,
In rushing river tides!

'Yon stream, whose sources run,
Turned by a pebble's edge,
Is Athabasca, rolling toward the sun
Through the cleft mountain ledge.

'The slender rill had strayed,
But for the slanting stone,
To evening's ocean, with the tangled braid
Of foam-flecked Oregon.

'So from the heights of Will,
Life's parting stream descends,
And, as a moment turns its slender rill,
Each widening torrent bends, —

'From the same cradle's side,
From the same mother's knee, —
One to long darkness and the frozen tide,
One to the Peaceful Sea!'

"'*Hæc fabula docit*,' — as clearly as smooth feet and rhyme can teach these solid and savory truths: —

"First, — two termini of human life, opposite and extreme. Evidently, the Professor is no believer in the heartless remark — 'No matter what a man believes, so he is only sincere, — it will all be the same to him a hundred years hence!' Are these different results of living infinite? we are often asked. The parable answers Yes, in the sense that they are as far apart as circumstances admit; precise opposites in location and temperature. True, indeed, the ancient patriarch separates them by means of 'a great gulf fixed,' while the modern poet divides them by a 'rocky wall,' or mountain. An inconsiderable difference; only a choice of means for coming at the same end. One looked up, the other down, for the cause. Doctrine the same in both cases, namely, — wide separation forever.

"Then, secondly, as to the nature of these two different states. The Professor calls it, on the one hand, 'Pacific Sea.' The common Christian, with hardly less of poetry, but with less power of condensation, says, — 'floating on the bosom of God's love,' or 'anchored in the haven of eternal rest!'

"On the other hand, the Professor says, — 'Dark, frozen tide,' — in order to avoid disagreeable associations with the gross material fire of the Orthodox. Well, perhaps there is left us, by divine intent, liberty of choice as to the imagery under which our finite minds try to conceive of these inconceivable evils. Some will prefer fire, some frost, according as they have been benumbed or blistered. The old Hebrews say fire without wincing. Dante says frost; and I suppose Swedenborg also, since he places his intensest hell on the extreme north-west of retribution. Little consequence which. Substratum of doctrine is the same, although the costume differs with the zone of the believer. The underlying truth is safe in either case.

"Then, again, the immediate occasion of these different results, namely, — man's choice or will. 'Heights of will' is the moral water-shed, according to the Professor. All right.

The New England doctors have always been firm on this point of personal guilt; personal, rather than imputed; ours, not Adam's. Sin, individual or generic, starts from the heights of Will. From that lofty peak, half concealed in the clouds, character flows down to the right or the left. So hold both wings of Orthodoxy; Edwards, Burton, Shedd; Emmons, Taylor, Park. Different theories of the nature of the Will, but one as to its grand function in originating sin.

"The parable also infers a controlling Providence. Surely it is not mere accident how the rain falls, else the Columbia would sometimes be dry, while the Athabasca overflows. The constancy and balance of both argues a wise and firm control of the fickle clouds.

'Those wandering cisterns of the sky,'

as an earlier poet divine calls them, may not know it, but their builder 'telleth their wanderings,' and they shed down or hold up, according to law and order. He that notices the fall of each hair, leaves not one drop unguided.

'From the same cradle's side,' &c.

"Only a sweet lyric dressing for those sturdy truths which Inspiration throws out, when it speaks of a loved Jacob and a hated Esau struggling in the same womb, and afterwards taking their respective courses according to that prevenient regard. And surely, if the great question be, what is going to become of a man, we cannot wonder that the wisdom and love, which watch sparrows and clothe lilies, should have something to do with settling it. This weighty matter, at least, will not be left to slide.

"We may remark, in passing, the difference between the theology of the intellect and that of the feelings. '*Pectus theologum facit.*' The Professor is Augustinian in this great red working muscle under the ribs, but Arian in that pale substance under the skull. When he rationalizes, he is warped from his rectitude; but no sooner does he begin to sing, than he rights up.

"Herein is revealed a broad principle. The average heart is Orthodox. Humanity, when it takes time to consider, always favors a positive system, — the regular old-school *régime*.

"Homeopathy and Eclecticism fail to carry the sober convictions of the sickly race. Cauvin, (Calvin) as the Professor styles him, was wise as well as mighty in knowing the genus man. How hard those who come after him find it to travel out of the deep groove which his stalwart mind plowed across the field of theological speculation! And yet the dressing of truth is by no means unimportant. We prate about the independence and the immortality of truth; but no fair lady was ever more indebted to tasty costume than she.

"This gem of a parable is universally popular. Everybody will sing it. It will go into the albums and choice extracts of hundreds who cannot away with the doctrines it fairly implies. It will be sung in the drawing-rooms and the nurseries of many who turn pale at the bare mention of Park Street.

"Yes, theology is under great obligations to poetry. Orthodoxy will go, if only properly trimmed, as blue pills do, sugar-coated. Even rugged John Cauvin (Calvin) can pass unsuspected, in the higher circles, so only a graceful poet beau him in. Nay, even the sturdy old Genevan has points that can charm the sensitive poet himself unconsciously into a loving agreement with him.

"Altogether, this Cauvinism (Calvinism) is a study. It must be a sore puzzle to those whose theory despises it. It is, forsooth, bony, and dry, and angular; but see how flabby a body of divinity is without this skeleton. How can such a pulp fight, or run, or even stand? Even its revilers sometimes find it convenient and practicable. They say naughty things about it in their popular essays and lectures; they make jocular toasts out of it at dinner-tables; they make as if a belief in it would make them fanatics, or fools, or fiends; and yet their songs languish upon the tongue but for some stirring refrain borrowed from this; and they keep their sweetest sonnets from

collapsing, by straining them over this strong, iron, sonorous framework.

"Even the Autocrat himself, who surely can live independently of theologians, if any writer can, is not only conscious of his indebtedness to some of this guild, but thus frankly acknowledges it in the introduction to the conclusion of his last essay in the 'Atlantic': 'Lest my parish should suppose we have forgotten graver matters in these lesser topics, I beg them to drop these trifles, and read the following lesson for the day.' Then follows 'The Two Streams.' That is, he would redeem whatever reputation for solid sense he might have hazarded in his light pleasantries upon that superficies of human life — manners — by appending to his essay a sterling lesson in five stanzas, resting upon as many strong points of Cauvinism. In other words still, this Professor in the dispensary of truth, finding that his handfuls of sweet pellets are likely to dissolve on the tongues of his customers without reaching, by any remotest influence, their hearts, rallies his generosity and says, 'Good and patient friends; now provided these fine preparations you have tasted should *not* do the work, here are five other pills, rather large and blue they seem, but still approved by the wisest of the faculty ever since the days of the renowned son of Monica, Dr. Austin, of Hippo; (adding in a low but distinct whisper) *we always give them when other things fail!*'

"Finally, every man, great or small, should be judged in his own profession or his forte. There he is at home and self-possessed. For that he has specially qualified and trained himself.

"M. D.'s are not always profound D. D.'s, although they play familiarly with systems, and, in their lucid demonstrations, make dry skeletons rattle again. Fine poets are not always sound theologians. They can utter words that burn about false religion, and make sweet rhymes about genuine religion, much easier than doctrinal joints that play easily, or creeds that will hold together under a strain. But, because a man is so unfor-

tunate as to be a lively wit, or a gallant hero at a dinner, his sober wisdom is not to be despised when it crops out unexpectedly on other occasions. The heart is a wise man's strength. With the heart he believeth unto righteousness. And if the child is father to the man, as one of the sages has said, then it is occasion for intelligent gladness when a curious, wayward son, consciously coming to himself, or unconsciously yielding to his better nature, is seen returning to do homage to the wiser sentiments he held when he was father to himself.

"CECIL."

CHAPTER X.

MR. HOSFORD AS A FRIEND.

"Spirits are not finely touched, but to fine issues."

SHAKSPEARE.

"Generous as brave,
Affection, Kindness, the sweet offices
Of Love and Duty, were to him as needful
As his daily bread."

ROGERS.

To understand Mr. Hosford in his social relations is difficult, if not impossible, unless certain traits of his constitutional temperament are kept in distinct view. His nature, essentially and always sympathetic and sensitive, was rendered, by education and culture, acutely and often painfully so. A delicate shrinking from publicity and from scenes of suffering, seriously taxed his nervous system, and sometimes rendered him silent because his heart was too full for words. This refined sensibility and the consequent reticence occasionally exposed him to the groundless charge of unsocial reserve and coldness. This charge, so familiar in the thoughtless world, is often hastily and sometimes cruelly brought against those whose hearts, in real kindliness and tender love, are immeasurably beyond even the conceptions of those who bring it. Of the

late Rev. Dr. J. W. Alexander, of New York, it was remarked by the Rev. Dr. Potts, of the same city: —

"Upon some, who did not know him, I have heard it said that he produced the impression of distance and coldness. It is almost the only defect I have ever heard urged against the perfection of his personal bearing; but it is a defect which loses its character of a fault, when we know that it arose from those physical causes which lie in a great measure beyond the range of the will, being almost as involuntary as the beating of the heart. Those who would magnify such an occasional infirmity, which often occurs in highly nervous and sensitive organizations, betray their ignorance of the mysteries of the human frame, or their want of candor. In this case the imputation is the more unjust, as the defect originated from the severe shocks of bodily disease which often threatened his very life."

Every word of this is true in the case of Mr. Hosford. A nervous and refined sensibility, increased by culture and aggravated by an enfeebled physical frame, subjected him to a sort of protracted martyrdom. And the oft-repeated language of his last years was, "*My sensibilities have killed me.*"

It will be readily seen that such a nature must greatly modify the modes of manifesting one's friendship, and must be understood in order correctly to understand Mr. Hosford. Eminently true of him was the couplet, —

> "*Words* — they but rendered half his heart,
> *Deeds* — they were poor to his rich will."

In a sense somewhat modified, it may be, we might apply to him also the lines of Jean Ingelow's "Afternoon at a Parsonage": —

"Man dwells apart, though not alone,
He walks among his peers unread;
The best of thoughts which he hath known,
For lack of listeners are not said."

In the little circles of friends at home and elsewhere, where Mr. Hosford could dismiss the thought of conventional restraint, he was a delightful companion. Frank, transparent, full of good sense and sparkling wit, and overflowing with a delicate kindliness and gentleness of manner, he made an impression on the hearts of those who really knew and appreciated him, which was often, in the best sense, talismanic, and which they never will cease to cherish with their fondest recollections. Here, too, was the *charm* of his letters.

In relation to the depressing effect produced upon him by witnessing scenes of suffering, he wrote to his wife, then absent, in March, 1851: —

"This effect has been deepened by daily visits to Mrs. H——, and the witnessing the sad scene there transpiring. To-day it was too much. I stood at the foot of little S——'s bed, and sobbed aloud for several minutes. In prayer I was choked again, and could recover only by turning thought away from that scene, and fixing it on Him to whom I spoke. It was a prayer, less an asking, than a giving up of the little sufferer to her Saviour, who seemed to be saying, 'Suffer her to come unto me and forbid her not.' It was not in our hearts to ask her restoration. The purpose of God was too clear and too near accomplishment in another direction. For the second time, therefore, I gave her up to God, then took her by her little cramped hand, and though she could not understand or respond, bade her 'Good-bye, little Sarah,' and came away in tears, as I now am at the thought of it. Not a little of my

feeling in the case comes from putting our darling in Sarah's place."

Two days later, he wrote: —

"At three o'clock I went to the house of mourning, tore me away from the coffin because I must not lose command of voice and tears, and so, with the utmost calmness, went through the service. I almost seem to have buried *our* darling, so vividly have I thrown myself into this case."

At another time, we find him writing: —

"A dolorous strain from Beethoven has haunted me like a spirit for some days, nor can I banish it, but only find a partial relief by sitting and thrumming it by the half hour together.

. . . . "Last eve I found time to call on Mrs. F——; was there at half-past eight o'clock in the evening, and found her, ah me! again in despair, and apparently dying. While praying over her bed, I could hear from her lips, 'No hope for me,' 'No mercy,' &c. With this vision, chanted to by the solemn grandeur of Beethoven's dirge, I fell asleep."

From the mass of Mr. Hosford's letters which illustrate the delicacy and yet strength of his friendships, a small part only can be given, and these such as are deemed most distinctly characteristic of the man as best known to his friends.

To one in whose family he had long been intimate, he writes in reference to a member of the family near the end of her earthly journey: —

"Do let us know, as often as possible, how our sister is, that we may know what to pray for, or when to cease prayer and give thanks, or (Heaven forbid it if possible) bow down our heads and be silent, knowing it is God. Don't doubt for a moment that you have our liveliest sympathies, and prayers, and our tears."

To the same friend, after the death of the "sister," and after preparing an obituary notice of her, he writes: —

"Sister and Friend, — How differently seems 'the place of graves,' after such a sleeper has taken up her rest there! How much more sacred, — how much less dreadful! . . . . . I am very glad I was led to go to her funeral, and to follow her as long as it was allowed me; and, when shut off from her bodily presence forever, to say with a tearful earnestness, 'Good-bye, sweet sister, good-bye until the glorious resurrection morn.' We have spent many hours in talking of her, and then in thinking, in silence, of those peculiar and delicate excellences which we have no words in our language to express; and the end of all such conferences is, — a prayer that a divine healing may distil upon the souls of the little family that survive to mourn."

To friends in Boston, in whose hospitable family he ever found a welcome, he wrote after an illness, July 6, 1860: —

"I know I ought to have reported myself ere this, but then poor humanity is so weak, especially when sick! Still this is but a lame apology for me, for I am altogether comfortable, gaining somewhat each day, and yesterday had not one ache or weakness all day long to remind me that I was otherwise than well. What may be transpiring underneath this promising surface, is a query which keeps rising, as often as I recall that *strange* Thursday night at your house. [He refers to his first attack of bleeding at the lungs, which occurred suddenly during the week of the Anniversaries.] I jolt on horseback a little, almost every day; take a carriage-ride with whomsoever invites; work gently in the garden; test my obedience by trying to take all the cordials which M—— prepares (their name is legion); spend a half hour each evening in trying to decide where, when, and how we shall take our vacation in the coun-

try; then another half hour in telling each other how many things we have to be grateful for, — and then float off into that dream-land where no troubles but nightmares ever come. Thus passes an ordinary day at the parsonage.

"Across these common experiences, there frequently passes the *very* grateful remembrance we have of you and your friendship towards us, that changes only to adapt itself to our changing circumstances. This is more *healing* to us than all which the Faculty can prescribe.

"I am surprised and greatly comforted by the expressions of kindness which I have received from all quarters. I could not ask for more or better friends. It would not be safe to have more.

"Come and see how well and happy we are, and thus learn what harvests are produced by the sowings of judicious kindness in the hour of need."

June 15, 1860, Mr. Hosford wrote to a friend in New Hampshire: —

"This familiar and untrembling hand will at once answer half your questions and allay half your fears. It is even *I* who write, and I write it comfortably; albeit I do not forget the recent past, nor blind myself to the possible future. But I think that in the good physicians' minds, the probabilities are largely in my favor, provided I am careful and restrain myself as I have not been wont to do.

"It was, as you heard, very unexpectedly to myself, on Thursday evening; — I found a crimson fluid welling up into my mouth; and this repeated thirty hours afterwards, — not much, — but still enough, crevasse-like, to set me thinking pretty seriously, and to cast about immediately for the best methods of repair, to which methods may the good providence of our Lord guide us.

"I read your truly kind and sisterly note with tears. These expressions of love and interest have been hard for me to bear. They have melted me down, and disempowered me as no pains

or dangers have. And yet I should have died without them. It was the few genuine friends I have, that made it hard for me to face the thought of death.

"After I am so strong as to talk safely, how much I should like to see you! How many sweet and sacred associations would come along in your train! Perhaps I may sometime ride up and drink deep of your rich, cool milk, and deeper still of the still richer refreshments of a true, self-sacrificing, long-cherished, and rare friendship. The Lord bless you and yours now and evermore."

To another kind and thoughtful friend, he wrote in July: —

"The last berry from that unparalleled '*heap*' is gone; but the smack of them remains positive and grateful on the memory. They refreshed both body and soul. We laughed and cried as we looked, ate, and gave thanks. Either our friends have been especially kind to us during this sickness, or we have been specially susceptible and sensitive to such manifestations, or both, or something else, — for happier hours I have never known; and, but for occasional glances into the future, (where, perhaps, I have no business to be glancing,) I should not care to be in happier mood. And as to that future which it is so natural for us to see all clouded o'er, — why should I not read it in the light of the past? What reason have I to assume that the Goodness which has been so abundant and wise thus far, will fail and forsake me there? Thus I school my doubting mind back into the attitude of *trust* and *repose* on God.

"I am, to all appearance, thriving finely. This exemption from toil and care, with good living, agrees with me, evidently! Perhaps it will appear that I was not made for such hard work! But soberly, I *do* desire health as never before; and all in order that I may do what I have so long failed to do, as a Christian minister."

October 12, he wrote to a friend: —

"Your many friendly attentions help me to live spiritually as well as bodily. They greatly refresh a weary soul which has sometimes been almost ready to break.

"We are now very comfortable, all. Our meetings left us something as yours left you, wearied, but not unblessed. They were, on the whole, very admirable; and I wish you and Mrs. T—— could have witnessed what you never can see as well among city churches, namely, — a two days' conference of country Christians, — *confer-ence*, — conferring together for the good of the churches, and at the same time enjoying each others' friendship and hospitality. It strengthens me to find myself a minister among such ministers, and a Christian among such Christians. After all the allowances we are compelled to make, it is evident that the most excellent of the earth are identified with the church of Christ.

"I am comfortable, and mending my ways somewhat as to cough. Not to have fallen back during the cares of this week, is really to have made progress."

During the same month, October, Mr. Hosford wrote to his friends in Vermont more particularly with regard to his health: —

"I have waited, simply to have something definite to say, which thing is precisely what I have not yet found. Am perfectly comfortable every way, — above the average of feeling for two years past; eat bravely, sleep tolerably, ride horseback unto soreness, and do nothing the remainder of the time. Took cold three weeks ago, had a bad cough, was anxious about it; but it has worked off very much as others have since my pleurisy sickness. This it was which made my look and feeling so ominous when T—— saw me. As to winter quarters and exercises, we are still in doubt, waiting some developments to help decide. Among the projects before us are, — trip in Tyler's fruit vessel (gratis) to Malaga or Messina, start-

ing next month; or going South, not extreme, but as far as Richmond, and circulate leisurely about during the rougher months of later winter; or, staying here in comfortable house, oversee parish matters, and take all the comfort possible in the case. Which we choose, or whether a something new which may start up, is all uncertain as yet. I have seen some sad hours lately, since doctors plead off as to my preaching at present, or during the winter; sadder, I hope, than I shall have to see again, whatever may transpire. I confess I have no great *pluck* to go through such experiences. I don't like to be struggling against what seems to be the strong course of nature, nor would I do it but that it seems *duty* for others' sake."

The following, addressed during the winter of 1860 to "Dear Friends," will explain itself: —

"We are *so* happy in that healthful and comfortable *result* of so much forethought; and that the result can be named Mary instead of John. The genus *boy* is an institution, but as to little M——, oh how unlike the boy! How special that creation, and in the family how beautiful! How strangely the cool, calm, dignified, and manly father's heart glides out toward a sweet little daughter, and is stolen by her ere he is aware, and to an extent he can never know till his knowledge of it is of no avail! May you never know some things about the sweet, melancholy mystery as I know them. . . . . Love to you all and health, from grandpa upward to this latest gift, or 'recent mercy,' as it used to be called in the Note of Thanks."

The following was addressed to a friend in Boston, March, 1861: —

"Friend T——: As the Boston doctors spoke rather hesitatingly, or at least not very certainly about the Mediterranean voyage, I had suspended the thought of it for a season, or at least till the next trip of the *Young Turk*. My progress since has rather confirmed me in this. I seem to be doing finely; never before so well since the eventful night last spring. So

our conviction at present is, — to stay about here or up country while the good weather lasts, and if the harsher days of winter threaten evil to me, then retreat South, as the wild geese do, making melancholy music by the way.

"The future alone will reveal clearly God's will in the matter. For your long-continued interest and kindness, receive again my heartiest acknowledgments. I hope to live to prove myself not utterly unworthy of it. And were it proper so to do, I should go on to express the hope that, at some future day, we should be able to see Italy and Sicily together, not as invalids, but in full vigor, and not as small fractions of men, but our better parts with us. That were a trip worth the while!

"After two or three days at Windham, N. H., I shall probably go to Vermont for two or three weeks. I did considerable work last Sabbath, and was refreshed in soul by it, nor was I weakened in body."

December 24, he wrote to friends in Boston: —

"We are this morning sending off letters where they are due; and now that our hand is in, we conclude to add one where it is *not* due, conveying thither our wishes for a better than 'merry' Christmas, even for one full of thoughtful, serious, tender, cheerful delight, such as is becoming in those who, like you and us, have learned where the deepest and purest joys of earth lie. Once, the word and thing 'merry' would have satisfied us abundantly. Now we are happy in seeing our children merry, but oh, how much deeper down our own personal experiences lie! How much the sad past, softened by time and by the grace of God, now does to mellow and enrich our present, and to temper our future hopes! And so, out of dead hopes we extract honey. From wrecks of our past selves, we construct our present better selves; and thus, by climbing upon earthly ruins, reach forth unto the skies! How strange the process in theory; how kindly it works in practice!

"But I have got quite off the track, for I was trying to make my pen tell you how often we think of you, and how many very pleasant remembrances we have of you.

"We find it a little difficult to adjust our thoughts to your city residence and life. We sometimes wonder if you have learned how to behave in such circumstances! whether you always keep on the proper side of the walk; whether you do not sometimes forget, and look into shop-windows at the pretty things as other country people do, and, most of all, (for this is a delicate point for *us*,) whether you still remember the country parson, and could do any thing with him, his carpet-bag and umbrella, and his wife on his arm, should such an apparition sometime unexpectedly break upon your vision!

"But curious as are some of our speculations on these points, we think we should not be detained from venturing the experiment, should the opportunity offer.

"I certainly should venture to the threshold of all this, if I could find announced in the papers, the Oratorio of the Messiah for to-morrow.

"Kent Street to Beacon Street, pulpit to counting-room, friendship in the country to friendship in the city, sendeth Christmas greeting."

September 25, 1863, Mr. Hosford wrote: —

"Your letter, so full of kind feeling, has comforted us not a little. It assures us that though we are now 'without a people,' we are not without friends, whose love for us will still be a home for our hearts. Next week perhaps I may see some of those places so full of pleasantest associations as the Hills Cedar, and Wellington, and the less rural but no less satisfying '72.'"

October 20th, he again wrote: —

"I thank you once more for your kind remembrance, and for that more than fraternal love, so strange between man and man. Write often, for your words of love, while they melt the heart, do also comfort and strengthen it. . . . .

"As to L——, I know she is the same, only more so, and therefore needs nothing from me but one of my old letters, with all the words italicised."

Only a single letter more can be introduced in this connection. It is addressed to a pastor in the Essex North Association, who had been called to pass through the deep waters of affliction: —

"Brother in Christ, in Affliction, and in Hope: — Heaven's records can show how much I have thought of you, and felt for you during these long and melancholy months which have followed the translation of your greatly beloved wife. The same record could also show how many times I have decided to write you, and then had the decision reversed by the thought that it was chiefly a matter between you and your God, in which a third person could be of very little service or comfort, however kind his intentions might be. So I have stood back, as the disciples in Gethsemane did, from their agonizing friend, not asleep as they were, but watchful and praying that your strength might not fail. And this I did from a vivid remembrance of what I have experienced within this memorable year I have tasted so deeply of sorrow as to know the *possibility* of a 'broken heart.' I should have known the reality, had not God been very gentle, not overtaxing the bruised reed. So I can encourage you with my personal experience of God's tender mercies in a time when only *tender* mercies could be borne. After all my observations of others' experiences, my own grief was surprising to me, as was also the quiet peace which was strangely mingled therewith. The whole matter has been, in one aspect of it, a wonderful revelation to me of self and of God, in their relation to each other; so that, although my loss is absolutely irreparable, I yet cannot say I would have it restored, if therewith I must lose the great and deep things I have learned.

"Are your feelings passing through a similar process? And

are you disappointed, as I am, in finding the grief remaining so fresh, — in some respects more and more so, and in wondering sometimes how I could have seen my beloved pass out of my hands into the Redeemer's, without some violent effort, at least of prayer, to prevent it! Ah me! I hope you will come into the right attitude of heart towards God more easily than I do. The loveliness of the dead, the great gain to them, the joy we have had for years in their sweet society, — do these help you at all to bear their loss? They do not me; and so, at last, I come back to a silent, unquestioning submission. I cannot see, but I trust and bow down. I think the Gospel promises us more comfort than this, but I do not find it easy to lay hold on it.

"This is the first great grief to you and to me. Hitherto, we were in but partial sympathy with the great family of the bereaved, in Christ's kingdom. Now, we are in full fellowship with them. And it is something more than theory with me now, that they do really help sustain each other by sympathy and prayer. I think that great and good fraternity has held me up sometimes when otherwise heart and flesh had failed. I *know* there is a solid and precious reality in this, judging from the feelings which I have had, during this year, towards you, and all my friends in Christ whom I have known to be lying and weeping under His heavy, but still benevolent hand.

"Mrs. H—— recently saw Miss Fidelia Fiske, in Boston, from whom she gathered many precious particulars concerning the last experiences of your beloved wife. If she must go, she could not have gone in a better manner, and perhaps not in a better time. I regret (as deeply and as piously as I can any thing which God has rendered impossible,) that I could not have been with you at the funeral service. Perhaps I could have said nothing audible, but I should have prayed and given thanks inwardly, as I have few such occasions of doing. I cannot understand why she should have felt and expressed what she did concerning *me;* but accepting the fact, I must

say that few things in all my experience here, have ever affected me in the lower deeps of my soul, as that testimony from the dying saint has done. God grant me true worthiness to hold fellowship with her in the better world.

"And now, dear and stricken brother, the Lord be with you unto the end. You have seen the worst of earth. What remains cannot but be better. So go on in hope and patience unto the end; which, perhaps, this sorrowful experience will help you to welcome, as you could not have otherwise welcomed, such a baptism as death."

CHAPTER XI.

MR. HOSFORD'S LOVE OF HOME.

"Around each pure domestic shrine
Bright flowers of Eden bloom and twine,
Our hearths are altars all;
The herbs we seek to heal our woe
Familiar by our pathway grow,
Our common air is balm.

"O joys, that sweetest in decay,
Fall not, like withered leaves, away,
But with the silent breath
Of violets drooping one by one,
Soon as their fragrant task is done,
Are wafted high in death!"

KEBLE.

AMONG Mr. Hosford's intimate friends, and especially the members of his own household, it has often been remarked that no one could really know him in his most attractive character, who did not see and know him *at home*. Thoroughly domestic, he was never quite at ease when absent from the home-circle, and always calm and self-possessed there.

"It would not be easy," writes an intimate friend, "to estimate how largely Mr. Hosford's success as a minister was due to the rest and joy which he found at home. In the weariness and reaction which followed pulpit services, when troubled by doubtful questions of duty, or chafed by outward misunderstandings and disappointments, *to this spot* he turned with a

trustful assurance that was strength itself. Here he seemed always best and completest. Whatever he found without to instruct or please did not become real gold to him, till it bore the home-stamp and inscription. The hearth was indeed the altar upon which he loved to lay his rich offerings of mind and heart. All that he gathered in the study of art or the enjoyment of music, in communion with Nature, or in intercourse with kindred minds, became the possession of the family, — a possession the more entire, as coming through his keen perceptions and perfect tastes. His fine imagination, playful wit, and rare powers of expression, here had freest play, and made him the most delightful of companions.

"Sacred as he held the domestic relation, it is not strange that it entwined itself so closely with his religious feelings, his soul climbing by the finite to the Infinite, and counting it no profanation to illustrate and comprehend this through that. When he spoke of the 'great mystery' by which Paul symbolized 'Christ and the Church,' there was a deep and tender meaning in his tones, that told how suggestive he found the emblem. Absent from home, his thoughts and wishes were ever tending backward or forward to it. In travelling, the enjoyment of new or beautiful scenes was kept in suspense by the home-longing, and became perfect, only as they were brought back by memory at his own fireside.

"It was for the sake of his family chiefly, that he desired to live, and sought to be 'a well man,' patiently enduring, to this end, the absences from them that were the bitterest trial of his last years. Remembering all the failings of heart and flesh that attended such separations, the many difficulties, doubts, and struggles which one of sensitive nature can hardly escape, during the years of a long ministry, — it is good to think how much of solid, conscious happiness was Mr. Hosford's portion in his home-life. Blessed was that experience of twenty years of wedded love, of which, reviewed in the very hours that the shadow of eternity was sinking upon it, he could say, 'It has been perfect — *perfect!*'"

In illustration of Mr. Hosford's attachment to home and family, the following selections have been made from a mass of letters, all of which are beautiful, and some of the best and tenderest of which are withheld from the public eye, only through that delicate sense of propriety which was ever so prominent in *his* domestic as well as his ministerial character.

August 5, 1853, he wrote: —

"During the spring and summer both my children have been sick, and, as I at the time supposed, unto death. This was a deeper grief than I had ever felt before. When God scattered the cloud, my gratitude and joy were proportionally intense. Again and yet again I bless Him for the family relation, and for my own more especially."

In 1854, referring to certain religious services, in which he had been unusually aided to speak a word in season, he wrote to his wife: —

"I have returned from these services feeling that our hold upon our children is much feebler than God's is. I pray daily that we may have learned the *lessons* of affliction, without having to drink deep of the bitter cup; and also, when I ask that the children may live, it is always with the understanding that they live well."

August 29, 1856, the day after the birth of his fourth child, he playfully wrote to his friend Mrs. T——, of Boston: —

"Grandma pronounces him complete! and she knows, for she has seen more than all we beside. You see, that from ten o'clock last evening to this morning, is too little time to settle the question of *name* for such a wonder, and so we wait. We hope he will be so much greater and better than J—— or C——, as to deserve to be ranked with their *nonpareil* sister!

Just think of it, — I mean, of the exquisite carefulness and kindness of that good Providence which gave you a little sister, and gave us a little brother! Why, all the forces in the universe, conspiring, could not have balanced the sexes any more perfectly in our household!

"The children have not yet got half satisfied with touching their little brother's fingers, and eyes, and ears, and nose, and not more than half satisfied as to the angel's name who brought him down and dropped him into his mother's arms."

In June, 1857, after a severe illness, he wrote to Mrs. H——, from Boston: —

"This rain settles the point that you will not come to-day. Indeed, I do not know as you have thought of coming, however pleasant it might be. But it got running in my head yesterday that you would come, and I was sadly disappointed that you did not. How much longer must I stay here? I am perfectly comfortable, but think I should get along just as fast, and just as well, at home. The W——'s, and W——'s, and H——'s, and D——'s, all have put in to have me come and see them, and *stay*, but this, you see, is utterly impracticable, unless I remain through another week. Yesterday was a good day in Zion — Henry B. Smith and Prof. Shedd. Evenings I don't venture upon.

"Tell the children that I have been into a bird-store, where are hundreds of canaries, and all the feathered tribes besides. Six Java sparrows sat on one perch and smoothed their dickies; five little puppies barked and tumbled over each other in one pen; eleven Guinea pigs ate grass in another; then squirrels, rabbits, &c., &c., enough to busy your eyes for two hours, to see. It was, on the whole, the prettiest sight I have yet seen, — so many little happy families of children playing together. Do our kittens play thus pleasantly? I hope so, for surely, God did not make them to snap and scold at one another."

At nearly the same date as above, he writes from Waltham, after a visit to Saxonville: —

"Yesterday was a sad day to me, Saxonville is *so* changed in its people, and your old home seemed *so* lonely, your good mother not sufficing to restore its former life and cheerfulness; and the little north parlor being so suggestive of you in those days when you were so free from care; altogether it was sad. I sat a long time and mused, even unto tears; and felt a tenderness for you more even than usual. I could hardly divest myself of a sense of guilt or cruelty in having been the occasion of taking you away from what was then so pleasant a home, and of introducing you to scenes so wearing upon you.

. . . . . .

"I am enjoying my stay here, as highly as any stay away from you can be enjoyed. From all these delights I shall be glad to speed away homeward, just as soon as I decide it proper and best so to do. Love to all the children. How sweet that little family seems to me from this distance. I hope no one of them will do any thing while I am absent, to make it seem less sweet on my return."

In September, 1859, Mr. and Mrs. Hosford visited Lakes Memphremagog and Willoughby. During his absence, he wrote to the family at home as follows, first from the "Owl's Head Mountain House," at the former lake, in Canada East: —

"Here we are, right under the very 'Owl's Head'; and three hours ago, *there* we were, right on the very crown of his head, exactly between his ears, and on the precise bump of benevolence! Three thousand feet perpendicular, above this water's edge! . . . . . Of course we are well and full of love for you all. Tell B—— I kept his dear mamma quite safe, and helped her down the steep places *very* carefully, because I knew he would wish to have me do so."

"LITTLETON, Thursday.

"FAMILY ALL, — Hither we came yesterday, leaving Willoughby in a terrible snow and rain storm, encountering snow-squalls all day. We are greatly refreshed by good news from home. Especially delighted are we to know that the children are reported as so good; this is better to us than sight of mountains or lakes. If the mountains don't freeze up, we shall go over to Franconia this P. M., and down to Thetford on Saturday."

In July, 1860, he wrote from Windham, N. H., to Mrs. H——:

"Your note and your child have come to hand, — both full of your own life and love. It is something *like* a visit from yourself, and yet so *un*like such a visit as to leave me decidedly sober, — even lonesome. I long, with longings inexpressible, for something further and better, and might be impatient for it, did I not remember how rich in all good experiences have been the last fifteen years of my life. If the future brings me less of the same thing, it will not deprive me of these remembrances. Perhaps they alone are as much as we ought to expect or ask, for the future. . . . . .

"We get along bravely here. Horseback daily through the greatest number of rural, woody, grassy roads; fishing one day, berrying every day, napping or noting; reading in shade in front-yard hot afternoons, and all the unmentionable *et ceteras* which cluster around such leading exercises as these."

In August, 1860, Mr. Hosford wrote to Mrs. H—— from Littleton: —

"Evening, 8½ o'clock. I have felt not only sober but sad to-day. My future, and your present, — mine uncertain, and yours so certainly burdened by love, fears, and cares, — *this* has overshadowed me all day. And then how sorely I miss you in all happy experiences, and especially on grounds where you have been happy with me! On arriving here, I went

straight to the hill from which we together saw that glorious sight of the mountains, — God's mountains, clad in the beauty of holiness. But they were hidden. Since tea, I have been there again, and saw them lift their veil just in season to reflect to me the last rays of the setting sun. They were true, though not seen; and so are some other objects on which my heart rests for its very life! So I am comforted again, and, after supplications, shall lie down with many sincere thanksgivings."

"Three sweet little children had their play-houses just where we stood to admire the mountains. I talked with them a long time for *our* children's sake. I hope ours will be as civil and modest to strangers as they were.

"The view of the mountains in sunset to-day was hardly less wonderful than that *we* saw, but entirely different. Partially hooded, — two rainbows resting one end of their arcs on the Franconia Mountains, — a full moon soon after, rolling up from behind the vertex of another mountain, — clouds exceedingly varied and beautiful in form, and all in rather grave colors, but tender and delicate, — as pink, stone, lead, &c. Altogether, well worth the journey from Wells River here, although I had many doubts about coming."

To his daughter, he wrote from Orford, N. H., in October, 1862: —

"We were greatly delighted and comforted by your letter received yesterday. I am glad you get along so well in Latin, and expect to enjoy much with you when we read Virgil together; and enjoy nearly as much when we play duets together on the piano. Keep on, study hard while you do study; and be very thorough in what you go over, whether it be much or little.

"You don't know how deeply interested we are in all your efforts to be and live a good Christian. Nothing gives us so sacred a pleasure, as to know you are struggling daily to be better in your *heart*, or in your inmost character. Our earnest

prayers ascend constantly, that God would help you in this most important of all matters.

"I was greatly delighted with your mother's Sabbath evening Bible exercise with her children, and wish I could have overheard it, or had some active part in it. If they all imbibe the spirit of what they repeat, and try to live by it every day and everywhere, their Heavenly Father will love them better, and take better care of them than their infirm and very imperfect earthly father can. Would it not be a good plan for us all, like Dr. Alexander's family, to select some one text that we will all try to live up to and live by, for a year, or some months; and will not you and mother select one?

"Now, dear, I know you are daily trying hard to be a good child. Try also to help the little brothers to be good and kind to each other, and especially to dear mamma, whose heart has always a heavy load to carry when papa is away."

To his youngest son, he wrote, October 10, 1862, from Orford: —

"Dear Isa, — I would give a new dollar to see your bright face this morning; but, as I cannot have *that*, I will do what is next best, namely, *talk* with you a little while through my pen.

"Yesterday I started off through the woods, thinking much of the time how Isa would enjoy it with me, and how dear little Mattie *did* enjoy it last year when I took her through the woods, jumping her over the brooks, lifting her over the old, mossy logs, and sitting to rest on the big rocks. The ground was all carpeted with beautiful leaves, and others were falling thick as snow-flakes. I send you two or three specimens. Don't you think they are as pretty as mamma's best carpet? *I* do; and yet I should a great deal rather have seen mamma's carpet, *with her on it!* Well, after I had walked and thought a good while, I heard an old partridge *drumming* just as I used to show you how. So I crept along slily so as not to scare her, and when at last I saw her through the trees, sitting still on a log, hoping, I suppose, that I should not see her, I

drew up my gun, and *powsed* at her, and in one minute she was dead. I did not see another, so I brought her home alone; but to-day I hope to find one or two to put with her, and then we shall have a nice breakfast or dinner. Papa is trying hard to get well, so that he can come home and live with dear mamma and her children, for there is no place that he likes so well as the place where they are. You must ask God every night to 'bless dear papa and make him well.' I hope you are a *very* good boy these days, and that you don't do one naughty thing to make mamma unhappy. If you are so good, your papa will be very happy, and will get well faster than if you were naughty. Good-bye."

In March, 1863, he wrote from Boston to his children, then in Vermont: —

"Dear Children, — We hope you are all getting along finely in your studies and behavior, and *if* you are, we propose to reward you for it by *not* coming home to train you, as soon as we otherwise might have done. Unless something occurs to call us home, we should be glad to linger around here till *after* next Sabbath.

"Heard Oratorio of St. Paul, by Mendelssohn, rehearsed, — a treat long to be remembered. Can hear it again next Saturday. Thus we drive along pell-mell; but no place now seems so attractive to us as 'the home on the ridge,' where we hope ere long to be once more."

To "Bennie," from Thetford: —

"Mamma bade me tell you how happy we were that you were trying so hard and so successfully to be a good boy and a good scholar. I hope you are quite as anxious to be a good boy at home, as in school. Good lessons are important, but not so important as good character, good thoughts, and feelings, and principles."

September, 1863, from Isles of Shoals: —

"Dear wife, dear children, dear home, and dear all things

and all persons who have helped make that home so charming, how warmly could I embrace the least of you all! Yes, how precious would be the dust of the feet which should bear any of you hither to-night. . . . . I hope the children are trying to do well. My prayers ascend, my heart breaks, my tears fall, my love flows for them daily and continually. I know not how a weak father could love more strongly or more tenderly."

Autumn of 1863, from Orford: —

"DEAREST ALL, — Your letter made me sad and homesick of course, and less willing than ever to be away from so sweet a family and home, especially on such sacred occasions as November 12.

"This house seems dreadfully lonesome. I have strolled all over it, but find it so unlike what it was last year! In finding my old hunting hat, I came upon Isa's old palm-leaf, bound with black, ragged indeed, but so full of his beaming face! I don't wonder W——'s eyes filled with tears in coming across such mementos of young, joyous life. And in hunting, I sometimes forget my game, in thinking over the sweet fellowships of the same places last year.

"Saturday, hunted over the familiar grounds, and you were brought *very* near when I scared five partridges exactly where you routed up the first flock last year."

A few days later, he writes again to his family: —

"I have long felt that I ought to be a better man at heart for having such a family; but I now feel that I ought also to try to be a *well* man for their sake; and so I am trying to be.

"You have all been continually upon my mind since I have been here. It is so sadly different when you four are out of your wonted place, that the place loses its identity. It becomes vacuum.

"It gives me solid comfort to hear that the children are trying to do well, especially in that best department of well-doing,

namely, helping their mother through the straits where the good Providence seems to be leading her. I hope my last sight on earth may be, — they holding her hands; as well to be led by her as to comfort her. Perhaps my own doings in that direction may be nearly over. At this I will not complain, so only I can see them taking up my work to finish it."

CHAPTER XII.

THE BEREAVED FATHER.

"I sometimes hold it half a sin
To put in words the grief I feel,
For words, like nature, half reveal
And half conceal the Soul within."

"This truth came borne with bier and pall,
I felt it when I sorrowed most, —
'T is better to have loved and lost,
Than never to have loved at all."

TENNYSON.

IN the spring of 1862, Mr. Hosford's family was, for the first time, visited by death. The victim was the "dear little Mattie," the sweet and gentle "pet-lamb" of the fold. To the father's sensitive and loving heart, ever throbbing with the tenderest domestic attachments, this "first great sorrow" was overwhelming. Though he bowed in unmurmuring submission to the dispensation of Heaven, he never fully recovered his wonted elasticity. His own health was already seriously shattered; and month after month he lingered, sorely chastened yet ever patiently cheerful, in that charmed spot, so well and so tenderly known to many a bereaved parent, —

"Where, in the shadow of a great affliction,
The soul sits dumb!"

Nearly every letter and sermon which he wrote, during the year following this affliction, seems tinged with hues reflected from that chamber of death.

It is proposed to give extracts from some of his letters in order to show *how* the grief of such a heart as his can overflow.

To friends in Boston, March 7, 1862, he wrote: —

"We are overshadowed by a dark cloud. Dear Mattie has been for two days very sick of croup, and is no better, although this morning seems so bright and healthful. For myself, I have more fears than hopes in regard to her, and am trying to school the humanity within me to say, 'Thy will be done!'"

To the same friends, March 10th: —

"Our dear little girl seems decidedly better. Yesterday A. M. her cough began to loosen, and she *raised* somewhat. This toned down her ugly symptoms at once. We now have as much hope for her, as before we had fear. If the disease is not in an ambush, it is retreating. Oh, such four days and nights! Years, *years* of experience in them, and that of the very deepest kind! We supposed that our Heavenly Father was drawing us along to that state in which we should have a full and perfect sympathy with you, and the W——'s, N——'s, S——'s, and, in fact, nearly all of those friends who have representatives from their domestic circles in the Better Land. And this we call life; and this we cling to; and weep over those who are delivered out of it! What strange beings we are! What *very* strange beings we are! But whatever be the result of this in regard to Mattie, we are certain of carrying as deep traces of it in our hearts, as we do of our watchfulness and grief in our eyes. Pray for us, but not too positively that the child may live; for there is something better than life, and many things worse than death. Yours hurriedly, and with tears both of grief and of gladness."

To the same, March 12th: —

"I wish I could write with as much hope as before, but I cannot. With all our efforts, we make no headway against this terrible enemy."

In a postscript to this letter, added subsequently, he says: —

"I have been looking at our womanly little sufferer, and would *hope* I have been too incredulous of the Divine Goodness in regard to her living. God grant it may be the great sweet surprise of my life, to see her well again, *i. e.*, if it be best for her and us. Otherwise, not. I wish to be ready to welcome *any thing* He may send."

To friends in Vermont, he wrote on the day of Mattie's death: —

"March 13, 1862, 3 o'clock P. M. Strange as it may seem to you, I feel an unspeakable relief as I tell you that our sweet and womanly little Mattie is now, so early in her life, and so unexpectedly to us, translated into the spirit-land. I say relief, because her agonies for the past twenty-four hours have been intolerable for us, and proved too great for her to bear any longer. Croup, *true* croup, in other words, the deceptive croup, the most terrible of diseases for sweet children, *this* had the honor of severing the tie that united her graceful body to her still more graceful spirit.

"During the last twenty-four sleepless and seemingly endless hours of agony, our prayer was for death, not for life. We gave thanks when God took her home, and gave thanks that it was *she*, — so much more perfectly conformed to the heavenly economy than our other children, and thanks too that she thus escapes such agonies as we, her parents, are now bowing under. . . . . Saturday, two P. M., we bear her away to burial, and so ends our sweet communion with her body, leaving our minds free to converse with her spirit, and to receive from it whatever of influence the laws of the invisible world

permit her to exercise. Our tears flow in floods, for she nestled in the very warmest nook of her parents' hearts; but those tears cast no reproach upon the Sovereign Disposer, of whom we can still say, 'He hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.' Yours, 'cast down, but not destroyed.'"

To friends in Boston, March 14th: —

"'Even so, Father, *because* so it seemed good in thy sight.' I have no other explanation of the event, and while faith is awake, I need no other. Sometimes, for the moment, faith falters, and then comes the cloud; but it soon passes, and I know that ere long I shall see the bow upon it. Perhaps the time will come when I shall see nothing but the bow. I take it that the atmosphere of heaven will have the quality of sifting out of earthly remembrances all the selfish, and dark, and even disagreeable associations, while it clarifies the vision of what remains.

"We have many things to say. We are full to overflowing of them, but we must be face to face when they are communicated. We can no more send them than we can send smiles or tears."

On the same day, March 14th, he wrote to other friends: —

"We now have the right to call ourselves your friends *in full fellowship*, for the only lack to it heretofore, namely, the fellowship of family affliction, is now supplied. We, too, have a sweet child in heaven, and alas! we too have the dread vacuum left in our hearts."

To a neighboring pastor, whose repeated bereavements had prompted him to express his sympathies, Mr. Hosford wrote, March 19th: —

"Dear Brother and Sister, — Your sympathies are genuine and Christian, and they fall on hearts bruised sufficiently

to appreciate them intensely. We feel unwonted drawings of heart toward those of our friends who have sat under the same great shadow, and especially toward those who have been so healed and comforted by divine grace, as to find their purest present pleasures in the remembrance of those sorrows. Wonderful, that we can enjoy so much in friends; wonderful that we can then suffer so much for them; and most wonderful of all that we can then learn to joy in the very sorrow. So does the Great and Only Wonderful surprise us on this hand and on that! So rich in goodness, so plenteous in mercy, that He can afford to permit these dark appearances, and still be infinitely loving."

March 24th, he writes: —

"You have probably seen in the papers what God, whose goodness is so deep as to seem dark, is doing with us! Our dear, sweet, quiet, blameless, womanly Mattie! the one of all the four to draw us most strongly after her, — the one of all the household to go upward with the least of change! We have every comforting and alleviating thought which such a case admits of; enough such to make outsiders say, 'Blessed be the Lord who hath taken such a child, and taken her so soon!' But all these soothing and sustaining thoughts do not prevent the great billows of grief from occasionally returning to overwhelm us. Our faith is strong, but our feelings stronger. The religious within us reigns serenely much of the time, but there are other times when the human rises and asserts its right to weep aloud. So we are struggling along, from hour to hour, never having fortitude sufficient to anticipate more than an hour or a day at a time.

"I did not suppose such an affliction would so paralyze us, and make every duty seem a burden. I did not suppose that the loss of one fourth in a household, would seem to destroy the value of all the rest. I did not know how weak I was in what I supposed to be my strength. Perhaps I should add that I did not know how real and positive the consolations of

strong religious truths could be in such a case. Amid all our weakness and short-comings, I still will bless God for sustaining grace given to our dying child, and to her living, dying parents."

May 20th, he writes: —

"Our sense of loss deepens constantly *my* loss of that sweet, thoughtful, saving influence, which radiated so steadily from her presence, ... just what a poor, rough, selfish, worldly man so much needs. I am learning daily how powerful it was on me for good. . . . . We shall be very dull scholars indeed if we do not live better and die easier for Mattie's life and death! Her last few conscious hours on that memorable morning, developed an almost unearthly maturity of look, and thought, and act, which we now dwell upon as the most remarkable experience of her little complete life. . . . . If anybody has dying grace, she had."

To friends in Vermont, recently bereaved, he wrote, June 31st: —

"You will now understand, better than before, the depth of my affliction, and will not think it so strange that it should follow me so long, with a freshness ever new. U——'s bursting out into loud cryings when he came unexpectedly upon little Frederick's hat, some months after his decease, is reënacted here almost every day of our lives; and not unlikely you will also learn what this is, and what it means. Oh, to have such a shadow settling over every thing earthly, all relishes so deadened, all ambitions so tempered down, all joys so modified, — and to have all these great effects flow from the death of a little child, — it shows what mysterious possibilities we are living among, and what powers of joy or sorrow we are bearing about in these souls, oftentimes without knowing or suspecting it! Poor little Arthur's suffering seems to have been worse than Mattie's, unless the disease paralyzed his sensibilities in part. Oh, her great, cool eyes looking up to us with

more than human understanding, and silently pleading for that breath which we could not give! I pray I may never be compelled to witness it or its like again. But I need not tell you of this, which, in its substantial elements of sorrow, is so like what you have just passed through. I trust the deep baptism of grief, (and you can now see how grief for a child may be deeper than any other, or at least tenderer, for love goes downward rather than upward;) I trust these recent, and to us *new* griefs, will help us in the higher experiences of the Christian life. We ought now to find it easier to live unworldly and unselfishly, and easier to leave the world when our turn comes. The invisible world is much more a reality, and a nearer and more precious reality, now that I have such a personal treasure in it. Indeed, it does seem *very* near to me, since I daily talk with one in it, — really in it, conscious and blessed, though I see her not with the bodily eye. . . . . .

"And now, having lived over my affliction anew in this fresh outgoing of sympathy for you at home, I turn away to other duties.

"Much of the little flesh that was clinging to my bones has been dissolved by the corrosion of silent grief, wearing upon it night and day. Still I work on with a secret conviction that I shall not bear up under it many years."

To his wife, he wrote from Belmont, in August: —

"I went this morning to church, but I was thinking, most of the time, of dear, departed Mattie, as I have been, indeed, ever since you left. Oh, how many times, of late, has the thought of her melted my heart and moistened my eyes! And from her, I turn thought back again to you and the remaining children, and get comfort in the hope and expectation that God will help hold you up by means of them. Oh, how deeply you lie in my heart, so very deep, indeed, as to make few ripples on the surface, — so deep that no earthly experiences can shake you out, no, not even the deep experience of death.

"Now, dearest, go on your toilsome, lonely way, cheerfully and rejoicing, and I will try to do the same. The 'Cross

Bearer' is my daily counsellor. Oh, how deep down it has driven thought and search! How utter the humiliation which it naturally begets! I have recently learned some new things about myself. But must I be utterly bruised and dissolved, in order to know the whole? And if so, can I ever be brought to say, 'As God wills'? Can I look on you and our children, and still say, 'As God wills'?

"Read the 'Cross Bearer' yesterday, with prayers and tears. Heard fine music in the P. M. Alas, alas, dear Mattie! Half my life has already gone after her, and the other half remains out of regard to you. May the Heavenly Mercy pity me, and take care of you all."

To "friends dear and long-tried," in New Hampshire, he wrote, Sept. 17, 1862: —

"We have had a very comfortable summer at home, until my *flurry*, [a fresh attack of bleeding] not very unlike the first at Boston, only not as alarming. I immediately suspended work, and went about playing and enjoying myself as well as I could in the circumstances. It has made me face the awful question of giving up preaching except occasionally; and I was meditating a full withdrawal from this field which has proved too much for me, when Mr. H——, seeing my dilemma, and moved with pity, sent me a check for a full year's salary, $1250, in order that I might be off and rest, without any care or thought as to pecuniary matters, and the necessities of the family. This offer modified my plan to resign entirely, and led me to ask release from all duties for a season, longer or shorter as need be, probably a year, at which time the final question will receive its yea or nay.

"I brought home from Boston, yesterday, a picture of our sweet Mattie. It was so perfect and lifelike as to make us cry aloud. Oh, how much longer must our poor hearts thus bleed, ere they will lie perfectly still, and repose on God? You speak of 'the anniversary of Mary's death.' Is not every day and every thought an anniversary? To me, life for six

months past has been little except one long thinking of the dead and of heaven, and of longings for rest from the conflict of life, for which my *spirit* is as poorly fitted as the body. Perhaps I am all wrong in this matter. I know I am weak and thoroughly human; but I hope not wholly wicked in it."

North Thetford, Oct. 1, 1862.

"Yesterday was, I think, the saddest day I have seen since sweet Mattie's death. I walked up to Tater Hill, on the road where she and I went one year since, — like David of old, 'weeping as I went.' Every step was on consecrated ground, and I paused wherever I remembered that *we* paused and rested. But oh, the difference! I could restore *her* very vividly, but the pure delight my soul then felt in her I could not restore! I sat upon a mossy rock in the woods, and cried aloud. There was no ear to be disturbed by it, and so I cried long, until I was wearied but not satisfied. Oh, why is it that so sweet a presence as hers, so near and so real, should make me so sad? Why does it not throw a peaceful charm over life?"

"November 12. To-day I shall not forget as dear Mattie's natal day; she whose early death we do not deplore, but whom, yet, 'we long for irrepressibly.' Her sweet spirit seems to float before my eyes all around these scenes of her last country visit; but I get a touch of her gentle hand, or a real sound of her soft, sweet voice. This spiritual communion with her is very sacred, but not satisfying. It leaves me longing and sighing, and the chief if not the only comfort at last, is in the thought that I shall ere long meet her in a way that will be satisfying. To-day, I suppose, you will visit her peaceful grave, but you will be no nearer to *her* than I."

"November 14. It seemed so hard, so *wrong* for *me* to be absent from such a family anniversary, [Mattie's birthday] me, who ought to be the chiefest one in it! I feel somehow

guilty of injustice to Mattie that I should allow myself to be where there are but few things to remind me directly of her. I fear I shall too soon forget her, or rather, suffer my memory of her to sink among the commonplaces of life. This should not be; for she was every way such a rarity as I shall not be likely to see again. I am happy to know that her resting-place is at last arranged properly, so that you can leave it with a blessing upon it. I am sure she must have *felt* the blessing which your sweetly sad anniversary left upon the spot. Do you suppose she understood why 'Dear papa' was not there with his offerings of love, and did she forgive me for the absence? Dear, dear child! I am glad she is done with tears, and cares, and fears, and knows of our state in such a way as not to disturb the sweet flow of her thoughts and affections. I rode down from Orford yesterday, and kept my eyes, as long as I possibly could, upon the mountain-side, up and down which I went with her so merrily one year ago. Oh, what a change in me has that short year wrought!"

"November 16. I went to Tater Hill again. Wept much by the way, but did not lose self-control. I was more than ever poignantly distressed at the loss of Mattie, and wondered, as never before, why we did not struggle harder with God to have her left to us longer.

"Yesterday, in my walk, I felt more homesick for Haverhill than ever before. I really longed to be back as the minister, or if that were impossible, then it seemed it would be a great refreshing of soul to be there for a few days, and see some of those whose friendship has been so true and so dear to me. Will preaching there again ever be my privilege for a year or years?"

Just a year from the last date, Mr. Hosford wrote to his wife from Orford, N. H.: —

"I wept anew at the remembrance of dear, dear Mattie, and took up the tearful subject again after I was in bed alone,

worrying through the whole subject, and finding no comfort save in the thought that *she* had not got to wade through our sorrows, nor again go through that dark valley from which her delicate nature shrunk. I cannot but say of her, 'It is well with the child'; still my heart keeps sighing, 'Oh my loss, my unutterable loss!' But we must let the deep subject rest with other deep things inevitable, and wait patiently to *see* clearly the wisdom and love which we know must lie buried in it somewhere."

During those days that, from the combined influence of grief, illness, and enforced absence from home, went so "painfully on," Mr. Hosford often jotted "stray thoughts" in a small Note-Book, under the general head of "Cloud-land." The following are specimens: —

"Any *compensation* for her loss? God does not design a compensation. The *soul* of the affliction is, — *No compensation possible.* Compensation would destroy the religious benefit."

"How much more intense and lasting the bitterness than was anticipated! How can wounded humanity resist healing or cicatrizing, so long?"

"We put our children's gold and silver in banks, that it may be safe, and increase, for time of greater need. Why wonder that God treats His children's jewels in like manner?"

"Why should the loss of one shade all that remain? Why not see + 3, instead of 4 — 1?"

"One day, the delight of the household; the next, the household plead for her death!"

"God seems to say, 'Can you give up this child?' Then, 'Can you see it die, and be calm?' then, 'Can you see it suffer?' finally, 'Suffer as long as I will?' Oh, how thoroughly God can break down and melt these hearts! By how many steps up to the climax! Do you see that father passing

friends in the street without observing them? Do you mark that mother's abstracted and vacant look at table or in company? Ah, they are thinking hard, but their thoughts are in the spirit-land."

"And now how real heaven is! a home for a part of our own selves! May not *we* then inherit it? Shall not our daily thinkings concerning it now be more vivid and influential? This localizes heaven to our faith. The lamb is with the Good Shepherd, and where both are, there is heaven."

"The consecrated child, by the Spirit's help, may be in advance of our hopes. How sickness or the approach of death brings out maturity! It is almost *awful* to think how much of God and of divine help there was in her during the last hours."

"'Ah, sir, the good die first.' 'The loveliest in the family is called.' Yes, and they were the loveliest because the Spirit had been preparing them for the translation. The decree which calls them also prepares them to answer the call."

"Imagination gilds the lost past; why not in like manner and equally the certain and more glorious future? Would not that be precisely the religious faith required?"

"We never conceive of her but as smiling and happy, always serene as a spring morning. Why, then, should such a vision make us sad?"

"Distance from the living children does not greatly disturb our joy; why then distance from her who is really nearer than they? To the one, we telegraph in an hour; to the other, instantly."

Though Mr. Hosford did not regard "little Mattie" as lost to him, but rather

> . . . "Within the door
> That shuts out loss," . .

"the intensely human" that was in him, sighed and wept itself out lovingly and longingly to the last.

Among the last efforts of his pen was the writing of the following, on "Searching for an Epitaph." It was published in the "Boston Recorder," in February, 1864, and was read and will be re-read by many with tearful interest: —

"SEARCHING FOR AN EPITAPH.

"Afflicted Friends, — You ask of us an epitaph for your dear little Alice. Alas, that the same blow should have fallen so soon upon you, also! We little thought it, when, two years since, your then unclouded spirits did so much to comfort us under our first great sorrow. We had hoped that the merciful Father would contrive some method for you to reach the results of a sanctified affliction without leading you through the deep waters of such an affliction. But it was rather His plan that you should come at it in such a way as would make you feel that now you are in full fellowship with the great company of the faithful who have entered into rest before you, not one of whom reached that rest without passing through a baptism of grief.

"But to the subject of your letter. Perhaps we can best answer you by rehearsing to you our own melancholy experience touching the same subject. Our own dear child, you recollect, was entombed in March. May, with its warm soil and springing grass was soon upon us, urging us to the choice of a final resting-place for her in the already populous cemetery. Oh, how hard it seemed to us to plant her amid a great congregation of the dead, as if she were no more to us than any one of them! Ere long we fixed upon a little plot upon a southeastern slope, sufficiently apart from the thoroughfares to be quiet, and still sufficiently near them not to seem lonely. There she was buried from our sight forever, the father assisting the undertaker in every step, while the mother and children each threw in upon the casket a little boquet, and then a handful of earth, with the prayer that her Saviour would cause

it to lie soft upon her sleep; and so we turned away, leaving her to the society of the sweet birds, to the care of guardian angels, and to those frequent and tender attentions which afflicted parents know so well how to pay to the sleeping-place of a beloved child.

"Then followed the matter of a monument, or rather, tablet. Oh, how many marble-yards did we examine, how many cemeteries walk through and through again, hoping to find marble in some form which would express her character. Alas, we might as well have examined all the girls' schools in a great city, hoping to find the materials of humanity in a form and complexion that would satisfy us, as another sight of our own departed one would have done.

"So, at last, we abandoned the hopeless search, and took a marble which would excite little remark any way, but which we hoped might bear some inscription which would be a perpetual comfort to us. We were pleased, at least, that its whiteness represented so well her purity. But it was dreadfully hard to put up so cold a substance to stand and perpetuate the name of one whose heart was so warm with heaven's love. No matter how soft the air may be, nor how warmly the sun's beams may bathe it, it remains ever true to its cold and severe mission, namely, to speak of death and not of life. We rarely visit the grave without passing a hand over its smooth surface, although the act causes a shudder, it is so very like that memorable chilly touch of the sweet sleeper's forehead on the first morning after her death.

"And this brought us to the matter of the epitaph, which, contrary to expectation, we found the most embarrassing of all our duties to the beloved dead. At first thought, nothing seemed easier than to select the precise record for a life so vivid and so unique, and yet, it was precisely because her image in our hearts was so well-defined and characteristic, that we found it impossible to get that distinctness fully expressed. Shall we give you a transcript from our pocket memorandum of some of the more promising records which, at different

times, suggested themselves? Of course we could not be satisfied with the hackneyed form of bare name and dates. Such a bald and dry record would never comfort or strengthen us in our great need. Then we thought of the briefer but more expressive formula, 'Little Mattie.' But the more we considered this, the more it seemed too like an unalleviated sigh. In justice to our God and to our own hearts, we felt we must say more or less. Then we wrote thus: 'M. W. H., whose bright earthly life of seven years melted into the brighter light of heaven, March,' &c. But consideration assured us that there was a seeming affectation of prettiness about this language which would wear away long ere we had mastered our grief, and so we dropped it out of the account.

"Ere long, our hearts uttered their tender sadness thus: 'Little Mattie, whom we cannot deplore, but whom we long for irrepressibly. She left us March,' &c.

"Or thus, in a similar vein: 'Little M., whose sweet life of seven years, the stricken household remember with gratitude and tears. She left us,' &c.

"For a while, we thought either of these expressed our feelings as well as might be in so few words; but ere long we began to find that no mere expression of our own feelings, however true the expression might be, could help us through the deep waters. We did not propose to visit the grave merely to sigh and break our hearts anew. We were to go there in hopes of catching a gleam of the Resurrection and the Life, else we were as well at home. And so we drew our pencil across these also.

"This next quotation caused us, perhaps, more thought and hesitation than all the others, and barely escaped election at last: —

> "'My blessed Master saved me from repining,
> So tenderly He sued me for his own;
> So beautiful He made my child's declining,
> Her dying blessed me as her birth had done.'

"The stanza is exquisitely beautiful, combining in a rare harmony the tenderest human pathos with the sweetest Chris-

tian resignation. Besides, we felt that it was substantially true to us. But while our hearts assented unto its main truths, and found a daily solace in repeating them, we still found (and the feeling grew upon us after our attention was once turned to it) that we could not sing

'So beautiful he made our child's declining,'

and then revert in thought to her death by the terrible croup, without a painful shock.

"Ah, we exhausted every expedient we could think of then, and have not yet ceased trying to make her transit seem 'beautiful' to us, as we know it must seem to her Redeemer; but no skill or piety of ours can avail to spread out the shining robes and wings of the loving angel commissioned to translate her, so as to conceal from our memory the frightful agonies preceding her death. To us her declining was not beautiful, but her escape from it was.

"And so we were reluctantly shut off from this, which we should have been so happy to use, had all the circumstances of her death favored it.

"You may well suppose that by this time, we began to grow weary of our search, but as we did, we became gradually convinced that no uninspired words would ever satisfy us long, and so we were kindly led back towards God's Word, from which it had been wise in us not to have departed so readily at the first. The final result of all, a result we ourselves little thought of reaching, was, that we took a simple text from the lips of one of the best of men, as also one of the first of whose affliction in the loss of children we have any record, and modified it thus: —

'LITTLE MATTIE:
The Lord gave her, November, 1854. The Lord took her away, March, 1862.
Blessed be the name of the Lord.'

"And with this, we have come to be more than content, not but the last clause is a severe test of our faith every time we read it; but we find it good to try anew, on each visit, to lift

our faltering faith up towards that serene and lofty standard. We know that sometimes we shall be enabled to repeat it with the whole strength and ardor of our soul.

"In a word, then, dear friends, we recommend an epitaph which is brief, simple, and scriptural, having in it a substratum of Christian doctrine which will furnish you a 'strong consolation.' Your grief will remain fresh and last long. I cannot tell you how long, except in this indirect way, namely, that it will wear out any consolation which is not in some way divine. The time will come when the tenderest friends of the present hour will cease to speak to you of your great affliction. Then, oh, how much you will need to meet at the grave the voice of that one Friend, who in all your affliction is Himself afflicted, and who is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever.

"You may think it strange that we should tell you again that your grief may remain fresher and continue longer than you now anticipate, even though your hearts become thoroughly and sweetly submissive to this stroke. Alas, a truly broken heart is not soon healed. Indeed, your hearts may never cease breaking anew over that little grave. But this we say, not for your discouragement, but only that you may be less disappointed at God's dealings with you in this new experience, and that we may add as the glorious counterpart, that if you never tire of going to that grave to weep there, the Great Consoler will never weary of meeting you there with divinest consolation.

"Yours in the great affliction."

The preceding passages are a record of almost heart-breaking bereavement, irrepressible longings for the lost, and grief which stirred the inmost depths of the soul. It seems right to say that there is another side to the picture. The stricken father walked before the world with wonted calmness and self-control, showing the inward emotion only, perhaps, by some added shade

of gravity, or, if it were possible, a deepening of his ever-full and large sympathy with kindred sufferers. Remembering the self-contained dignity with which he endured the affliction that was so keenly felt, it is most true to say of him, "Thou hast been as one, in suffering all, that suffered nothing."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE PURSUIT OF HEALTH.

"Suffering is the work now sent ;
Nothing can I do but lie
Suffering as the hours go by :
All my powers to this are bent.
Suffering is my gain ! I bow
To my heavenly Father's will,
And receive it hushed and still :
Suffering is my worship now."

RICHTER.

"Nothing before, nothing behind :
The steps of Faith
Fall on the seeming void, and find
The rock beneath."

WHITTIER.

MR. HOSFORD'S health, which, previous to his bereavement, had been seriously shattered, became more and more obviously feeble after that event. An allusion has been made to the sudden attack of hemorrhage, during Anniversary week, in May, 1860, at the house of Deacon Tyler, in Boston. The bleeding was not very copious, but it was startling, and prostrating, and quite unexpected. To his wife, who hastened to him the next day, he said, with entire calmness, and yet with consciousness of his danger : —

"Last night, as I lay here alone, I was full of peace. Heaven seemed very near, and it seemed *so* easy to step in, —

only you stood in the door and shut up the way. . . . . But for you and the children, I would not have it otherwise."

The bleeding continued at intervals for several days, and he remarked in reference to this: —

"I am surprised at my calmness, and could almost think this strange peace which fills my soul to be dying grace."

Again: —

"I cannot be thankful enough that I was raised from that sickness [1857] on Water Street, and permitted to see this work of grace among my people. God seems to have owned my labors, and, imperfect as it has been, I cannot now feel that my ministry has been in vain. Yes, it is easier to lay it down now, than it would have been then."

Mr. Hosford rallied in some measure from this attack, and at length attempted to struggle on again beneath the load of care and responsibility incident to his office and work. But he had scarcely a day free from suffering, and more or less of exhaustion. Again and again did he, with genuine heartiness, adopt the familiar words: —

> "My feet are worn and weary with the march
> Over the rough road and up the steep hill-side;" &c.

After his bereavement, his sense of loss, and the ever-bleeding wound of his sensitive heart, doubtless contributed considerably to increase the general depression of his physical system. One bright and beautiful link in the chain that bound his domestic circle together had suddenly been broken, and his house, and home, and heart, had now for the first time been consecrated to Death. And though he early made the

happy discovery that "pain and pleasure are akin to each other, and that man enjoys only in the measure in which he *can* suffer," it was not without a sore conflict that he was enabled to say, with all the heartfelt emphasis of sweet experience, "*Blessed* are they that mourn," and consciously attained that sturdy faith by which one "walks on the waves" of the troubled sea. Like every other sufferer, he had to be taught, little by little, that while God is "patient because Almighty," man becomes patient, not through his strength, but through the ministry of his weakness, — a sense of which is gained only through the discipline of trial; and that, in this discipline, he has to be led, a poor, blind, weak, and wayward mortal, by a way that *he* knows not, before he fully finds that he can be patient, or afford to wait upon either God or man.

At times the struggle of the bereaved parent and the consciously failing pastor, with bleeding sensibilities and slowly but surely waning hopes, was so severe that he was led almost to long for a discharge from the warfare, and he sometimes breathed out his emotions in those striking words of Mrs. Browning's "De Profundis": —

> "Only to lift the turf unmown
> From off the earth where it has grown,
> Some cubit-space, and say, 'Behold,
> Creep in, poor Heart, beneath that fold,
> Forgetting how the days go on.'
>
> "From gracious Nature have I won
> Such liberal bounty? May I run
> So, lizard-like, within her side,
> And there be safe, who now am tried
> By days that painfully go on?"

But the great and necessary lesson which God designed to teach him, was at length fully and happily mastered. And thenceforward, while he had not less of the human, he became far more manifestly a "partaker of the divine nature."

It is said that some of the pagan tribes of Africa invariably change the place of their residence after the occurrence of a death in the family, because they have a horror of the power that bereaves them. By removal, they hope to escape the power, or the presence of the deity who exercises it. How unlike to this is the experience of the Christian! His God, though He leads by a way unknown and by the path of sorrow, awakens in him more and more confidence in His goodness, the more he suffers; and, ordinarily, instead of being inclined to desert his home, because it is desolated by death, the survivor loves it and clings to it all the more fondly. This was especially true of Mr. Hosford. He had always loved his home, but he now loved it and the very spot where the great shadow came over him, more than ever. And this rendered the trial of leaving it, in his search for health, all the greater. But a sense of duty dictated it, and, during the remainder of his life, he was absent from his family, or from Haverhill, a large part of the time.

To a friend, who had invited him to accompany himself and others on an excursion to the Catskill Mountains, he wrote, September 1, 1862: —

"If I were quite well, I should strike in with a keen relish; but being as I am, I cannot think it would be so well for

health (and this now is the great thing) as a retreat inland and upland, towards horsebacks, and woods, and quiet. I shall try hard and conscientiously to get well, so that I may once more have part, not only in labors, but in these pleasant recreations with friends. So far as I have any plan now, it is to go North next week, spend two months, more or less, thereabouts; and then, either go into winter-quarters there, or go West, or take a voyage, or, — or, — or, — &c."

He went, accordingly, to New Hampshire, and, October 15th, wrote from Orford to his wife: —

"'T is a chilly morning, and I write chiefly to get warmed up. Sunday, at church, or walking at evening, or in some other place and way, I took a very bad cold. Kept about, as usual, Monday, but in the night coughed according to my worst coughs. The doctor [his brother] did not hear me till two o'clock, when he took me in hand with a practice at once tender and heroic. He stopped it in due time. . . . . .

"As I have never yet been able to see that wet or dry, hot or cold, affected me much any way, save that I have uniformly felt better in autumn and winter, and have always protested I could breathe easiest in *damp* air, I cannot feel the great force of argument for any great change at present. I find that many winters here are about as cold and nearly as dry as those at Minnesota. What should you think of burrowing here under the snow, and amid the comforts of this home, till March or so, then *via* Philadelphia and Washington to the West, taking a one or two months' look at Northern Illinois and Minnesota? I honestly think it would be a very rare climate afar off, that would be an equivalent for W——'s daily watch and care."

October 20th, he wrote to his friend W——:

"I spend most of my leisure time up here in wondering what you are about down there amid the hurly-burly of business, express trains, bogus telegrams, and lying extras. Few

such things disturb our quiet up here. One train and mail daily, — to bed at eight or thereabouts in the evening; hunting partridges pleasant afternoons, sleeping in the chair at odd intervals, and such an easy, good-natured way of doing work and bearing cares as consists perfectly with undisturbed repose of spirit; a dreamy, Indian-summer sort of life, — such as is quite welcome to, and altogether becoming in, one of my years, who has worn himself out in hard service.

"Come, suspend your turmoil-life for a little, and see if this sort of hazy experience will not do *you* good also. . . . . Can you *hunt?* Plenty of partridges are drumming in the woods for you. At least *I* have not made their numbers much less. *Or fish?* The deeps of our outlying ponds are populous with old-settler trout and pickerel, — so they say. *Or preach?* I have more calls than I can answer, and will gladly make over the surplus to you, as an 'experienced lay helper.' Or any thing else you have a propension for, here it is. Come, and help yourself, and I will help you."

To other friends: —

"Of course you know where we are, for has n't it been in all the papers? But the papers did not state that we are all here, (alas! all that remain,) that we five board with our brother, the doctor, — a nice, comfortable home where, for want of suitable schools, we, *i. e.*, Mrs. H—— and myself, drill the children in the mysteries of science from 'baker, brier, cider,' up to Latin and algebra.

. . . . . "Now as to the great matter for which I am here, health, I hardly know what to say. I wish M—— would fill out this part of the letter; but, as she is busy elsewhere, I will do my best. Well, then, I eat well, sleep tolerably, saw wood moderately for an hour or more, walk *do.*, and, when the weather favors, *hunt* two, three, or four hours. Are not these symptoms of health? *Per contra*, the symptoms of sickness are, that I am here, that I write nothing but letters, read little, take wines and oils, get rubbings instead of giving them, dose,

and wait for something to happen which will help me to some great decision."

To friends in Boston, he wrote in December: —

"I am doubly careful and conscientious about being much in the open air daily. Accordingly, this clear, cold day, I have been in the woods and 'under arms,' four long hours, driving a vigorous and somewhat successful war against the partridges. But so nicely was I encased in flannels, wash-leather, and india-rubber, that the snow did not get a momentary chill so far in as where *I* was."

After announcing some improvement in his prospect for health, he sorrowfully adds: —

"But lower down in my soul than any thing I have said, lies the conviction that I had better try a change of labor, at least for some few years. My pastoral charge at H—— seems more and more satisfactory to me; indeed, I desire nothing more than sufficient health to endure it. But I have a deep impression that it is the will of Providence that I serve Him elsewhere."

To other friends, he wrote: —

"Our winter passes very pleasantly, considering we always have to bear the thought that for the time we are broken down, set aside, and may never be wanted again. Oh, how soon one who has slipped out of his place in the great whirl is forgotten! How many stand ready to put on his boots, do his work, and reap his reward! But, if God has any farther work for me, he will open place and occasion, and with more wisdom and love than I could exercise toward myself. On this truth as on a rock I rest, and wait the opening future."

To friends in Belmont, he wrote, December 22d: —

"The vision of Wellington Hill haunts us continually, and its presence in our memories is a continual benediction upon us. It came afresh to mind last evening, as M—— was reading

aloud to our little broken, but still pleasant family group, Bunyan's account of Christian's toil upward to the palace Beautiful, and thence onward to the views of the Delectable Mountains. And our hearts immediately took up the refrain, in which there was some shade of melancholy mingled, 'When shall our eyes and our hearts be refreshed by another view of that unequalled landscape, and by another interview with those friends who are always the foreground in that landscape.' But our longings for what we have not shall never make us unmindful of what we have; and so we will continue to be very happy here in our rural retreat. Our present condition, though having somewhat of the character of an exile, is still very pleasant. . . . .

"I am not only grateful to the good providence of God for so much of restoration, but also for its suggestions in sending us here for the winter, instead of banishing us to Minnesota, or across seas, so far from what we love best. According to present appearances, this place, with its accompanying recreations in the open air and in the woods, is doing for me all that climate and regimen can do. If now the Master will smile upon us, we can ask no more."

To a friend and neighbor in Haverhill, he wrote, December 25th: —

"As our own family-sources of happiness dry up, we are learning to be happy in others' happiness, and thus it is that we rejoice for you and with you to-day, with a special joy. May you see many such days *all together*. At the same time, we cannot but hope you will grow each year more independent of these occasions as sources of happiness, your hearts settling down peacefully but *firmly* upon what our friend, John Lord, calls 'the eternal certitudes.'"

To the same friend, he writes again, January 10, 1863: —

"Although we are as pleasantly situated as it is possible to

be, under the circumstances, we begin to have unusual longings for a something more. We do desire to see our old home and well-tried friends again, and once more to have part in their daily experiences, as friend with friend, or as pastor with people. Will this again *be?* . . . . . Cough and rahl remain unchanged. Otherwise, decided improvement.

"The box of 'cod-liver' came safely, not one bottle, I regret to say, broken. This I take devoutly every day, and don't lose flesh upon it, which is stating in the strongest possible terms that I am a strong man. . . . . The children enjoy the large liberties of the country highly, and will develop muscle if not brain. I am glad for them that they can have one season's taste of those rural scenes which were so pure to my boyhood, and are so fresh and delightful to my manhood. . . . . Mattie's sweet and speaking picture hangs over my desk as I write, — indicating, as I love to think, that she herself is quite as near as her picture, and may be the bearer to me of those strangely sad-pleasant, those melancholy and yet heavenly thoughts, which often come into my mind so unexpectedly, and linger there as if they would make it their home."

CHAPTER XIV.

WANING HOPES.

"Be near me when my light is low,
When the blood creeps, and the nerves prick
And tingle; and the heart is sick,
And the wheels of Being slow.

"Be near me when I fade away,
To point the term of human strife,
And on the low, dark verge of life,
The twilight of eternal day."

TENNYSON.

DURING the winter and spring of 1862–63, our dear brother, though very feeble, had been encouraged, both by his own feelings and by his physicians, to believe that he was, on the whole, slowly improving. That he had, however, many misgivings about the future is evident from nearly every thing he wrote.

As the weary days "went on, went on," it became more and more apparent that the discipline to which the Father subjected the child was working "the peaceable fruit of righteousness"; and, while he was still as far as ever from being a stoic, he could, with more and more emphasis, adopt the language of a sufferer who long since trod the path of sorrow on his way to his rest: "O Lord, when the flail of affliction is upon

me, let me not be the chaff that flies in thy face, but let me be the grain which lies at thy feet."

He fully recognized the necessity as well as the reality of tribulation's flail, and felt more and more comforted by the assurance that it was held by God's hand. He was delighted with the transparency of God's intentions. While the bitter pill, given by earthly parents to the sick child, is often sugar-coated, not so much to sweeten it as to deceive the reluctant child with the false idea that there is nothing bitter beneath the thin disguise, he was happy in the thought that all the bitter that his Heavenly Father had given him, He had, with a sublime candor, forewarned him to expect and tenderly asked him to receive at God's hand as God's honest decision in regard to the necessities of his case.

And they who saw his waning hopes, notwithstanding his earnest endeavors to recover health, could mark the increasing emphasis with which he uttered such sentiments as those expressed by Miss Waring's beautiful hymn upon the words, "In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and confidence shall be your strength": —

"With a heart full of anxious request,
Which my Father in heaven bestowed,
I wandered alone, and distressed,
In search of a quiet abode.
Astray and distracted I cried, —
'Lord, where would'st Thou have me to be?'
And the voice of the Lamb that had died
Said, 'Come, my beloved, to *me*.'"

During the spring of 1863, while yet at Orford, Mr. Hosford was again brought very low by a new

attack of his overmastering disease. His physicians and friends felt it to be quite doubtful whether he would ever see Haverhill again. In these doubts he participated. "But for *your* sakes," he said to his family, "I would gladly lay down this poor, exhausted body.... As to the future, *my* future, how can I feel any anxiety about that, when the provisions of God so exactly cover my case?"

Again, during three weeks of extreme prostration, he once said: —

"I never had any remarkable experiences to fall back upon now; but this I know, there is a broad covenant of grace in which it has been the aim of my life to have part.... How strange it seems that I should have broken down just as I did, when, to our view, I was most needed; when it would seem, if my life were ever worth any thing to the Master, it is now that I am thoroughly furnished. I don't understand the plan at all. It is not necessary I should. It is a righteous plan, because it is God's plan, and best for you and for me. God will lay nothing upon us that He will not give us grace to bear.... Perhaps I ought to feel more anxiety about this matter, but I have looked it in the face so long that it does not appall me. I know my own sinfulness and short-coming, every way. It seems as if I never did any thing right in my life. Such mixed motives as entered into my best doings! But I know, too, what Christ has done *for* me, and in His righteousness I trust."

At this period of suffering, Mr. Hosford often read and pondered the beautiful poem entitled "The Border Lands." As he declared it to be expressive of his own feelings, and essentially true of *his state* at the time, it is doubly interesting to read the words now rendered so sacred in the memory of his friends: —

"THROUGH THE BORDER LANDS.

"FATHER, into thy loving hands,
My feeble spirit I commit,
While wandering in these border lands,
Until thy voice shall summon it.

"Father, I would not dare to choose
A longer life, an earlier death;
I know not what my soul might lose
By shortened or protracted breath.

"These border lands are calm and still,
And solemn are their silent shades,
And my heart welcomes them, until
The light of life's long evening fades.

"I heard them spoken of with dread,
As fearful and unquiet places,
Shades where the living and the dead
Look sadly in each other's faces.

"But since thy hand hath led me here,
And I have seen the border land,
Seen the dark river flowing near,
Stood on its brink, as now I stand,

"There has been nothing to alarm
My trembling soul; how could I fear
While thus encircled with thine arm?
I never felt thee half so near.

"What should appall me in a place
That brings me hourly nearer thee?
When I may almost see thy face,
Surely 't is here my soul would be.

"They say the waves are dark and deep,
That faith has perished in the river;
They speak of death with fear, and weep;
Shall my soul perish? Never, never!

"I know that thou wilt never leave
The soul that trembles while it clings
To thee: I know thou wilt achieve
Its passage on thine outspread wings.

"And since I first was brought so near
The stream that flows to the Dead Sea,
I think that it has grown more clear
And shallow than it used to be.

"I cannot see the golden gate
Unfolding yet to welcome me;
I cannot yet anticipate
The joy of heaven's jubilee;

"But I will calmly watch and pray,
Until I hear my Saviour's voice,
Calling my happy soul away
To see His glory and rejoice."

Mr. Hosford, having rallied sufficiently to resume his pen, wrote to a friend, April 27th: —

"Yes, dear brother, I do try to make *Him* 'a very present help in time of trouble,' — in *my* troubles, in mine of *this* day and hour. But it is so much harder than to believe it in the general, or for others!

"For three or four days I have been considerably more comfortable, though the evidence is conclusive that the lungs are left in a poorer state permanently.... From present appearances, there will not be any immediate change for the worse. We rather hope for a gradual strengthening. A week or two will assure us how God intends to deal with us in this great matter. We have thought much about a return to Haverhill. We have no other thought than to be there, if the sickness were soon to terminate. If it lingers, then it might be as well to stay here longer."

A few days later, he wrote to a friend in Haverhill:

"Your last letter stirred many deep and tender feelings within us. Verily, human friendships have an important part to play, especially when flesh and heart seem failing.

"Your suggestions about going to Haverhill, &c., we consider favorably, but shall not need to hurry so long as I seem to be amending, as now. When the time comes for me to lie

down at last, I desire that it may be among those with whom I have spent the best part of my life. . . . We cannot yet decide about a return to Haverhill. Should n't wonder if we come in June to tarry until a final removal from the home that has been so dear to us! Oh, that will be a sadder day than I hoped ever to see! I can hardly endure the thought in prospect. As soon as I am a little stronger I must begin to look around for a something to do and a somewhere to be."

May 1st, he wrote to his friend, Mrs. W——:

"Mrs. H——, myself, and B——, have been out 'Maying' this bright morning. I creep along rather slowly, with short breath and faltering steps, yet with cheerfulness and joy. The ability to do this once more, and so soon, seems to us hardly less than a new creation for us. Perhaps we had better say 't is an answer to earnest friends' prayers. We walk out and sit by the hour in the sweet, clean woods, now so full of the beauties and melodies of spring life, from all which we seem to drink in health, as we surely do inspiration and hope.

"'The Lord of Hosts is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working.' It would be wrong for me to have any one of these sweet days which He lengtheneth out to me, clouded by any unchristian fears for the future; so with the excellent Whittier, I try to say, —

"'No longer forward nor behind,
I look with anxious fear;
But grateful take the good I find,
The best of *now* and *here*.'"

Even during these days of great weakness, Mr. Hosford did not wholly abandon the practice he had followed for many years, of furnishing occasional articles for the newspaper press. From those he wrote during the season, two are selected and here introduced, for reasons which the reading of them will make obvious. The first is entitled —

"GOD'S ROBINS.

"We welcome back the faithful pair which have, for many years, had their nest immediately before our chamber window. They seem to know and to love us, as we do them. They hop leisurely out of our path as we approach them; they follow close upon our plough and spade, which turn up for them their favorite food; and during incubation, mistress robin sits, and only turns her white-rimmed eye down upon us as we walk underneath, as much as to say, 'Ah, is it you? — all right.'

"You need not be told what a sweet singer robin is; how varied, how rich, how mellow, how full of a strange resemblance to human sentiment his never-tiring melodies are. Should the robins, some spring, forget their reckoning, and appear no more among us, their absence would awaken regrets quite akin to mourning. Had any other bird been the martyr in place of poor 'Cock Robin,' that inimitable nursery tale would have lost its chief pathos.

"This season I have had more leisure than usual to observe and enjoy the robins. They have done not a little to brighten and sweeten the monotony of confinement, and they have taught me some things which I had not learned in the schools. The *praise*-character of their singing has especially impressed me. How spontaneous and hearty, and how early is it rendered. The faintest dawn in the east does not break the precarious sleep of the invalid too early for him to hear this sweet and joyous matin, going up, as if the worshiper had long been waiting for the gladsome hour. Oh! why cannot *we* sing in spirit thus early upon our waking, and as joyously, and as naturally? Why do not the blessings of a peaceful night so fill our souls that they must break forth with the opening day, — 'I laid me down and slept, and awaked, for thou, Lord, makest me to dwell in safety!'

"These morning choristers have not yet broken their fast; they know not where they may find the first seed or worm wherewith to break it, and still they sing. It may, withal, be a

cheerless, drizzling morning, such a one as many a good man only submits to, and that, perhaps, with a murmur; but the piety of redbreast, neither dampened nor chilled by the unpleasant weather, gushes out in the same free style; nor would his melody alone give you any reason to think it was not one of the pleasantest mornings of summer. Thus, neither unpleasant surroundings, nor fears for the future, are by the robins made an occasion for the neglect of duty or for loss of joy. The first awaking hour is sacred to cheerful praise. The first business of the day is to adjust their relations with the Creator, and this is done not of constraint, but of a ready mind.

"I have also been pleased to observe how late in evening the robin sings. His vespers never are forgotten, and they are among the last sounds heard from the living world. They die upon the ear while the latest twilight is fading from the eye. And so, his last conscious act each day is a song. Is it paid *intelligently* to Him who has given the pleasant day? Who can answer, Nay? Who wishes to answer, Nay?

"Oh, what a joyous life is that, — each day opening and closing with a song, with occasional intercalations of joy as opportunity offers. How well-balanced the spirit which is ever ready to do this, and does it so naturally. Can you conceive how a robin's life could better please its Creator? What more complete statement of Christian daily duty than this of the sweet robin's life, namely, praise, labor, praise. Whether looking backward upon labor done, or forward to labor yet to be done, always seeing occasions for praise, and always ready to sing of them. This is life indeed!

"Our little sparrow, with her unpretending song, and her dress of neutral colors, which hops close about our door, and sometimes upon the threshold for crumbs, and builds her nest of small strings and hairs in the lilac beside our door, excels the robin in one particular. During the night she occasionally wakes from sleep and sings. She calls to remembrance her song in the night. Whatever be the cause of her waking,

it matters not to her; she turns it into an occasion for song. True indeed, that song is brief, — only a few sweet chirps, but it is long enough to show that the little heart is right, — always confiding and always full. While sleepless and impatiently watching for the morning, I have frequently caught this unexpected ripple of praise. I have even heard it in the midst of a gentle rain. One tiny creature, then, remembers God during the night-watches. David said hardly more distinctly, 'When I awake, I am still with thee,' and Paul and Silas in their midnight prison hardly did more than this.

"I am not ashamed to confess that I have felt rebuked by these things. Weariness, restlessness, pain, heavy care, and a great abiding sorrow, often break my sleep and make my pillow seem thorns, when I sigh out in words three thousand years old, 'Wearisome nights are appointed unto me'; or in similar words of a somewhat later day, 'Hath God forgotten to be gracious; hath He in anger shut up His tender mercies?' and I think I do well to be impatient and distrustful, and feel half justified in withholding my praises until God gives me a happier state. Oh how far behind and beneath the sparrow in point of trust, and peace, and duty! For is not God quite as near to me also, and as kind? Is He not as near and as kind to every one in sickness, in sorrow, or in any trouble? Is He not so also to you, sad and sorrowing one? for you are of more value than many sparrows.

"Ah, how strange and humiliating, that, as we descend in the scale of being, we rise in the scale of fidelity to God; and that man, made but little lower than the angels, is taught lofty lessons of wisdom and piety by the birds! But this being our sad state, let us be thankful that God recovers us by such sweet, gentle, and faultless instructors as the robins and sparrows.

"Cecil."

The other article, published in the "Boston Recorder" of July 10th, is entitled —

"MY FATHER'S ORANGE.

"The poor, worn invalid lies sleepless and restless, while all the family around are drinking in the blessings of 'tired Nature's sweet restorer.' His lips are fevered, his tongue cleaves to the roof of his mouth. He cannot help contrasting his pitiful condition with that of others, though he knows this to be wrong, and every such comparison gives him pain. His troubled soul again asks if God has forgotten to be gracious, and if His mercy to himself is clean gone forever. In short, he is sick, sad, and tired of himself; and his faltering faith is in sore need of something to stimulate it to lay hold on some of the many precious thoughts of God. 'Oh, if He would only speak and assure His child of a Father's love.' In this depressed state he reaches out his thin, translucent hand, and takes from the little table at his bedside an orange, which the loving care of some kind friend had left the evening before. So soft and juicy, so cool, so refreshing and harmless withal, so perfectly suited to his present taste and weakness, — as if the Infinite Love had devised it for the sick alone, — he presses its rich contents upon his burning palate, and is strengthened. His thirst is quenched, his fever cooled, and now his restored brain works more reasonably and piously.

"'That orange,' says he, 'could not have met my want any better, if it had been created for me alone. So far as I am concerned, the Divine love has exhausted itself for my comfort. I am not then *quite* forgotten of Him.

"'And what pains He has taken to bring that blessing to my hand at this critical hour. It grew in Cuba, or Sicily, or Fayal, thousands of miles hence amid the seas. But His hand plucked and wrapped it, held it secure in its hollow amid the yawning waves, brought it safe to port, expressed it thence far into the country, moved the friend to purchase and leave it here, and *thus* did my watchful and loving Father's hand place

it within mine. No miracle of mercy was ever more timely and direct than this mercy to me. Had God spoken it into being at my bedside, and in answer to my midnight cry, the miracle would not have brought Him nearer to me. Ah, now I know there is *one* invalid whom the Omnipotent hath not yet forgotten; one feeble and tired child, at least, who in the night-watchings has occasion to sing of the loving-kindness of the Lord, — a very present help in time of trouble.

"CECIL."

Mr. Hosford rallied sufficiently to be able to return to Haverhill towards the end of July. His joy in a little return of strength, and his strong desire to get back to his dear old home, had much to do with his effort. He felt, however, that this "patching up" was only temporary, and that when cold weather returned he should probably sink.

After reaching Haverhill, he wrote, July 30th: —

"The 'old parsonage' *is* dear to us; it never seemed more pleasant; never fuller of sweet associations with both the living and the dead. But these joys are all saddened by the thought that this is our last season in it, and that we must soon go forth, Abram-like, not knowing whither."

Mr. Hosford had long been gradually coming to the decision that it was his duty to seek a release from the pastoral office, inasmuch as, though he did not and could not perform the duties of the office, he could not shake off the cares and the sense of responsibility belonging to it, to an extent that left him in the most favorable circumstances for improvement in health. Hence he foresaw the necessity of leaving the parsonage, and seeking another home, a step which cost him

the severest struggle, and almost a daily pang for many weeks.

In August he went to the Isles of Shoals, where he remained eight weeks. During this time he gained ten pounds in weight, and was somewhat encouraged. From his numerous letters while there, the following are extracts: —

"Isles of Shoals, August 10th.

"Came in part as the easiest way to get rid of the incessant cry, 'Shoals,' 'Shoals, for such cases,' — from the high authority of Dr. B—— down to the young women who said they had spent a day here and felt better. . . . . I am not here to fish but to breathe, and so I sacrifice my preference, and give my fullest lungs to the work set before them."

To his wife: —

"Dearest and Best, — This has been a very lonely Sabbath to me. No public service, no good books, no serious-minded friend, nothing save *cell*-thoughts here, and dreadful longings for you whenever I went upon the rocks where we spent so much of last Sabbath so very pleasantly. Such days draw the life out of me. They must be prevented somehow. I wonder that I have not learned to bear them better. When I could read at all, I went for the twentieth time to see good Christian and his still better wife safely over the dark river. I counted them happy; and among the hosts of shining ones on the further shore, I could see some — *one* at least — who looked toward me with a love that drew me strongly and mysteriously. There is but one love on earth that can countervail it. Between the two, drawing me in opposite directions, I stand powerless and motionless, waiting the touch of the Divine finger which will send me from the presence of this into the presence of that. Were you both on one side of me, Omnipotence alone could hold me in place. I hope this has

been a more comforting Sabbath to you. The house has many other pleasant associations besides those connected with me, and the children are a perpetual relief and diversion when present, so that you do not have to feed upon your own vitals as I do when away. I am glad of this, for it is more important that you be kept from breaking down, than that I should be merely comforted in my broken estate. So go on as the Lord shall give you strength.

"I continue much as when you saw me last. No symptom for the worse that I know of. I sometimes cough a little when in bed; but the coughs are only the offspring of *sighs*."

"August 26. This is, on the whole, a queer place, but well worth the trouble of seeing once. 'Water, water, everywhere,' and jagged granite rocks in all the rest of the places."

In his exile from home and from "the Continent," Mr. Hosford dated the following, —

"PATMOS, Sabbath eve, September 6th.

"This has been Communion Sabbath with my friends at home. Shut off from the sanctuary service, and from all society of Christians, my thoughts have been much with that church where, for nearly twenty years, I have been permitted to keep this sacred ordinance with well-beloved friends in Christ. My hand would gladly have taken that bread, and my lips that cup, in fellowship with them to-day; but in place of such personal presence, memory, imagination, and faith came to my aid, and so my spirit was brought nigh to Calvary, and to Him who there completed the great work of man's redemption. I heard no human voice, yet the Spirit seemed to breathe into my soul, — 'Wounded for *your* transgressions — bruised for *your* iniquities — by my stripes *you* were healed. Receive thou this sacrament with mingled penitence, faith, and love. Do this in remembrance of Me.' And as I mused, the fire burned; so that, never, perhaps, was a communion-hour more impressive, more humbling, and more comforting to me.

"There are times when the soul alone comes nearer to the august, invisible realities than when in the company of fellow-believers. There are times when its own reflections are deeper and truer for itself than the words of others, even of the wisest and best can be. Truth is, all the genuine exercises of personal piety, especially the fundamental ones of repentance and faith, must be wrought out without the aid of others. As friends may accompany us to the brink of the dark river, but beyond that cannot go another step to guide and cheer, so may they assist us up to a certain point in our religious experience, but over the threshold of our heart of hearts not one of them can pass. Into the holy of holies of the soul, its Creator God only can come. So it is while apart from all others, that the choicest secrets of the Son Divine are whispered to the attentive, loving heart. Why, then, need occasional solitude, or the absence of all external means of grace, be the subject of tearful regret? What a melancholy mistake, to make that an occasion of unusual sadness, which may be made the occasion of unwonted joy."

Again: —

"We have had no religious service to-day; so I have had no let nor hindrance to meditation, all of which has been serious, — some sacred, — some tearful, — on the whole, such as might be expected of humanity overburdened yet trying to rise."

Again: —

"Your letter . . . calmed and comforted me. I sang to myself 'My Heart and I.' I continued the song through the evening, and then with more than usual peace and hope dropped into sleep."

"September 10th, before breakfast. Just in from watching the big breakers. . . . . Fearful wind all day yesterday. No mail homeward, no news from America, no arrivals or departures, no any thing save wind and homesickness. Every

sail scud into harbor at Portsmouth, and the broad sea as well as our Sea House looked melancholy indeed."

To a friend in Boston: —

"How this sea-faring life is to affect my weakened parts, I cannot yet say; only I can testify to a gradual accumulation here and there among my bones, of that substance which influences the scales, and which gives you such a superiority to me, in that small matter of 'personal presence.'"

The following, dated September 14th, to a lady in Haverhill, explains itself: —

"My heart melted for you when I saw your husband's death announced in the newspapers; and I need not say how sad I felt that I could not have been there to comfort him and you all in the last tearful hours of his life; and then, in the Redeemer's name, and in the faith of the better life, commit his worn mortality to its long and peaceful sleep. But this was not to be, and so we bow to it. We give him up in sweet, strong hope that he goes before to the better land, and that his going before will help you who remain to prepare to follow, and will make your own surrender of life all the easier when the appointed hour comes. Dwell much upon that precious name, — '*the Widow's God*,' i. e., more tenderly and nearly your God than hitherto, though you may not at present see it by reason of tears blinding the vision. But you will see it some time, and bless Him for the manifestation.

"Yesterday I read the second part of the 'Pilgrim's Progress,' — the journey of Christiana and her children heavenward, through all the ruggednesses of the way, and finally, over the dark river. I read and thought of you. Read *you* the same, and be comforted, yea, strengthened. In the great spiritual blessings with which God has visited your household, you have great reason for thanksgiving. Let not present grief turn your thoughts wholly away from *these* doings of the same wise and loving Father.

"Please make over my benediction to your daughters in this early and sore trial of their Christian confidence, and tell the little brother that I hope he will soon flee to his Redeemer's arms, so that Christian friends, looking upon you, shall say with joy, '*All in the Ark!*'

"You may not often see my face or hear direct from me, but you may rest assured that you will often be in my thoughts and in my heart as a subject of prayer. And thousands of fellow-believers who know the bitterness of a family affliction, will also be praying daily that mourners may be comforted. Will not such prayers, from bleeding hearts, bring down some divine healing into your own? It must be so, as God hears and answers prayer.

"That you and your sweet little flock may now come under the more tender and immediate care of the great and good Shepherd, is the prayer and the expectation of your true friend and companion in tribulation."

To his wife: —

"I am not so very sad, only I *do* love you all rather too much for a weak man to bear with exuberant cheerfulness. I affirm that I behave real well considering what I am deprived of, — which is nothing less than almost all of that which has been my life and joy for a score of happy years. But oh, that ever-looming future, so dark and uncertain to me; so clear and sure to the sovereign Disposer! In His hands it must lie, and there, (may my heart have grace to say,) there let it lie. I have been meditating my letter [of resignation] to the church to-day, and you can easily imagine it has made me rather sober. Oh, is it not a pretty serious business?"

To friends in Vermont, September 18th: —

"I have this week written and sent my resignation, — a bitter, bitter duty. Like the death of a friend, it exceeded and crossed all anticipations. It was an affliction to my soul, for I had come to love my place and my work. Besides, it sets me

afloat without the slightest intimation, as yet, as to where I shall go, or what do, or whether there be much of a future for me any way. Were I separated in responsibility and affection from my household, I should not care overmuch about this earthly future. But I have neither the piety nor the fortitude to look at the future as it will affect them, with me gone, or helpless, or possibly a burden.

"I am sorry to write in this strain, but I could not write truly and say otherwise. When the cloud *lifts* I will reflect the light I receive. None will be so glad as I to do it. . . .

"I think I can see how one whose interests in the great future are insured, should not care to come back when past the summit of the difficult journey between. To make up one's mind to go, bowing to the Divine will, this is the substance of dying; and is it not enough to go through this experience once? My sickness last spring at Orford dissolved my hold on life more than aught I ever experienced before."

He wrote again, September 25th: —

"Life here is becoming insufferably monotonous. I want to begin to work; if this is forbidden, then go inland where I can ramble and hunt, *i. e.* exercise sufficiently and at the same time have a diversion.

"All things considered, the freedom of the woods is better for me than close confinement in this delicious air. . . . The truth is, there are so few here that nothing brave or novel is attempted. No fishing, no singing or playing, no chatting and laughing in friendly cliques, — nothing but eat, eat, eating, diversified by sleep, sleep, sleeping."

After returning to Haverhill from his "Patmos," Mr. Hosford wrote, October 12th, to one of his Vermont friends, who was recovering from illness: —

"If your sickness dissolves your hold on life as mine of last spring did, you will find *work* in future to be a very serious and a very *heavy* business. The lengthening shadows of life's

afternoon and evening will no longer trouble you. But this is not to be deplored. It may be only proof of higher wisdom and grace. It is, at least, a great change from our former young and ambitious worldly selves; and I have no hesitation in adding, a change for the better."

During the month of October Mr. Hosford spent a few days among his friends in Orford, N. H., from which place he wrote, October 20th, the following letter of tender condolence to an afflicted family in his parish: —

"Dear Friends, — Of no family except my own have I thought more frequently or tenderly during my absence than of yours. I think of you and pray for you as an afflicted family; for such indeed you are, and as such will share, I trust, in the results of a sanctified affliction. I am apt also to think of you as a *sad* family; but in this I am wrong; for why should any family be sad into which the Master has come to do some great and unusual work? Was the little household at Bethany sad when it was said to one of their number, 'The Master cometh and calleth for thee?' What did she do? 'Then she rose quickly, and went unto Him.' Even on the supposition that He cometh for the purpose of taking down 'the earthly house of this tabernacle,' what then? Why, 'the building of God, the house not made with hands,' &c. Let us think more of that *result*, and less of this *process;* more of the *end* which Christ's love is seeking, and less of the *means* He chooses to employ. Still, had He chosen a milder discipline for you I should have been glad; for we not only love life ourselves, but we love to see others enjoy it. But after all, if we can only rise above *the human* in our views and feelings, and look at this matter in the simple and clear light of the Gospel, — look at it with *the Christian* part of ourselves, how plain it will appear that this present life is *night*, and the future life *day;* this present to be used cheerfully and thankfully while it lasts; the future to be longed for, and welcomed as soon as the Master permits. . . .

"How often does the Saviour lift a poor unworthy soul that trusts in Him to a level of joy and peace in dying, *above* what He seems Himself to have experienced! It is almost too much to believe that He will treat you and me with a holier and tenderer regard than He treated Himself! But it is even so, and this is our exceeding joy. He has always disappointed believers on the side of mercy. You and I will find it so in our own case, unless our faith fails, and perhaps I may add, that He will see to it that our faith fail not."

Of this last visit of Mr. Hosford to the home of his childhood, his sister writes: —

"It was chilly November, his visit drawing to a close. The last Sabbath came round, when he sat side by side with his elder brother in the sacred desk. Here he stood, buttoned up and upright, as one in health, morning and afternoon. Lastly he spoke from these words: 'It is appointed unto man once to die.' These solemn thoughts were carried out in singing the sublime anthem of Dr. Callcott, 'Enter not into judgment,' &c. In the evening the services of the day were recalled, and with calm consent that all had been well done. This closed up his last Sabbath in Vermont."

CHAPTER XV.

DISMISSION.

"I need not be missed, if another succeed me,
To reap down those fields which in spring I have sown;
He who plowed and who sowed is not missed by the reaper,
He is only remembered by what he has done!

"Not myself, but the truth that in life I have spoken,
Not myself, but the seed that in life I have sown,
Shall pass on to ages; all about me forgotten,
Save the truth I have spoken, the things I have done."

ANON.

ALLUSION has been made in the last chapter to the "bitter, bitter duty," as Mr. Hosford called it, of his resignation of the pastoral office. The following is his letter: —

"*To the Centre Congregational Church and Society in Haverhill:*

"BRETHREN AND FRIENDS, — A year's entire rest from pulpit labors and pastoral cares has not restored to me, as I hoped it would, the health necessary to resume those sacred burdens; and no alternative is left me but to resign, as I now do, the charge I have kept for eighteen years, in order that it may be given to one of full strength and grace. I therefore desire the Church to unite with me in calling an Ecclesiastical Council as soon as convenient, to consider and act upon this resignation.

"My pastoral connection with this people has been so uni-

formly pleasant, and has so many cheering evidences that it was approved by the Great Head of the Church, that I have been very slow, perhaps too slow, to admit the painful necessity of separation. But that necessity is now past question; and I bow to it submissively, though with a heavy heart. It is to me a great affliction, — the second great affliction of my life. Had it not been so, I should not have struggled so long and so hard to avoid it, — keeping you in painful suspense the mean while, and, for a part of the time, without the benefit of a resident ministry. To me, as a Christian pastor, you are my first and only love. My labors for you, continued under bodily weakness and heart-sorrows, must witness the sincerity of my regard for you, as also your patience and kindness, under these short-comings of mine, testify to your considerate and friendly regard for me. We part, with little to regret in our intercourse with each other. And as to the future, I am sure your prayers will still follow me as long as I remain a subject of prayer, while mine will still be upon you, that you may continue unto the end, as you have been until now, a spiritual and saving power in this community, and a flock of God in whom the Good Shepherd will ever take delight. And now may the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ.

"B. F. HOSFORD."

In accordance with the request in the foregoing letter, a Council was called, which convened October 26, 1863, and with painful reluctance and many tearful regrets, after much deliberation, voted to dissolve the relation so long and so happily continued, and so full of tender associations for the beloved pastor, for his flock, and for his brethren in the ministry. They did this because the circumstances seemed to render it necessary, and Mr. Hosford felt that it would be better

for him to be entirely free from the cares and anxieties incident to the office of pastor. Aside from his own "preference, on the whole," the Council would have greatly preferred that the faithful and beloved pastor of eighteen years' standing should die, if die he must, in the midst of those who could still call him "*pastor*," and whom he, with his dying breath, could still call his "*people*."

That the sundering of the tie which had so long and tenderly bound him to his people was a very sore trial to him, is abundantly evident from his letters and private papers written at the time and subsequently. He could scarcely speak of it without weeping. His sensitive nature seemed, for a time, to be bleeding at every pore. It overwhelmed him to think that his labors, as a minister of Christ, were done. Among the thoughts which, here and there, he jotted down, like his "Cloudland" thoughts after his "first great affliction," were found, after his death, three scraps of poetry which he had selected and carefully pinned together for use, upon the subject which, at the time, so deeply absorbed his mind. One of these appears at the head of this chapter. The other two, the first by Whittier, the second anonymous, will appropriately close the chapter.

'It may not be our lot to wield
The sickle in the ripened field;
Nor ours to hear, on summer eves,
The reaper's song among the sheaves:
Yet, where our duty's task is wrought
In unison with God's great thought,
The near and future blends in one,
And whatsoe'er is willed, is done."

"We scatter seeds with careless hand,
And dream we ne'er shall see them more:
But for a thousand years
Their fruit appears
In weeds that mar the land,
Or healthful store.
The deeds we do, the words we say,
Into still air they seem to fleet:
We count them ever past;
But they shall last;
In the dread judgment *they*
And we shall meet!"

CHAPTER XVI.

"BREAKING UP."

"Oh for the faithful mind, the steadfast eye,
To keep our Leader's glory full in sight,
And make our converse, even while we die,
An interchange of triumph and delight.

. . . . . .
. . . . . .

Count all the pains that speed thee to thy rest,
Among the riches of thy purchased right;
Yea, bind them in His name upon thy breast,
As jewels for the Bride, the Lamb's delight.

And love shall teach us while on Him we lean,
That, in the certainty of coming bliss,
We may be yearning for a world unseen,
Yet wear our beautiful array in this."

A. L. WARING.

AFTER Mr. Hosford's release from the cares and responsibilities of the pastoral office, there were some favorable indications in his case. Many of his friends tried to persuade themselves and him that he was really better, and might yet live and labor in some other sphere of usefulness for years. With much misgiving, he also tried to believe that their judgment was correct, and that his own mind might have been unduly influenced by depression. But the favorable indica-

tions were soon seen by all to be only the momentary gleams of the expiring lamp. Amid his tossings to and fro between hope and hopelessness, he summoned the courage to enter upon the irksome business of seeking an appointment as Chaplain at St. Augustine. Dr. Bowditch, of Boston, who was familiar with his case, felt from the first that his strength was not equal to such a position, and, as the sequel proved, he fortunately failed in the project, in consequence of the abandonment of that station.

He next wrote to Newbern, N. C., in order to ascertain what facilities for comfort or usefulness that place afforded for "a semi-invalid," as he called himself. But the way there also was hedged up, the friend to whom he wrote not promising enough on the score of health to offer any inducement to go.

In this perplexity, he wrote, October 17, 1863: —

"Our minds are constantly exercised as to whether we shall move this autumn, — *when* move and whither. Oh what a relief it would be to us if that Providence which looks all through the future, would only speak clearly to us as to what had best be done. We must soon decide somehow, and take the consequences. . . . . Come and take your last taste of pears from my garden while it remains mine. Ah me! how kindly I feel to it; and ever since my return from Orford, I have worked day upon day in it, just as earnestly and almost as cheerfully as if I knew I should gather the fruit of my labors. But some good man will if I do not, and this is the great law, 'One soweth and another reapeth,' which works in my favor quite as often, perhaps, as against me. . . . . We are living very scripturally, *i. e.*, living by faith in ravens, and yet not quite certain but they may some day forget to go to

market, as ordered, and so we miss a dinner. . . . . But thus far we have tangible proof that our Heavenly Father *does* care for sparrows."

Meanwhile, his strength was evidently declining, and none could fail to see it. Wearied and worn, after an almost supernatural attempt to make himself useful, he wrote the following : —

"Sabbath evening, November 22d, 1863. Thank God for evening rest. Wearied with labors to-day, in order that others might enter into rest, my exhausted nature now drinks in repose, oh how deliciously. I seem to absorb it at every pore. Blessed be night, and thrice blessed a Sabbath night.

"A day of tender sadness this, loaded down with the melancholy events of a week. What a yawning chasm in Mr. H——'s pew, though filled before by 'only a little girl of seven.' How hollow my own heart felt as I looked down upon it!

"Mr. B——'s household stricken by news from their only son sinking fast by fever, in a hospital six hundred miles away. Alas, his warfare doubtless ended ere this Sabbath dawned.

"Mr. P——, with an infant for baptism, whose lovely mother bore it, looked upon it, sighed *Benoni*, and then fell asleep.

"A score of others whose older wounds were opened afresh by the sight of these. And then the tender thoughtfulness pervading the young, by reason of these speaking providences, — a very critical state of mind, ripening into life or death eternal! All of these affecting cases I have tried to meet in prayer and discourse with fit words and feelings. But who is sufficient for these things? Who can enter into these griefs as a pastor should, and still bear up under them as he must? My own soul has gone out of me into them. My spirit has been almost broken in their behalf. I feel personally afflicted to-night, and in need of being myself bound up. But the love

of Christ has consoled me *somewhat*, while I was trying with that love to console them. The compassionate Redeemer has not left me utterly alone. Precious the healing which He imparts, but dreadful the bitterness of heart which needs such healing. O Saviour, let me freely receive of it, that I in turn may freely give, or we all perish together.

"This poor heart is bowed down and broken, yet not utterly forsaken of its Maker. Humanity, a sad state at best, but redemption leaves it not in hopeless despair. Thank God continually for His gentleness and grace, but oh, the weakness and sorrows of mortal life notwithstanding that great clemency!"

Among the last sermons which Mr. Hosford had wearily written and preached, was one upon Christian Submission. He closed it by reciting what he called "these sweet, strong words of the Evangelical German, Julius Sturm, — words in which faith gains the victory, but only through hard struggles." This wonderful piece, entitled "God's Anvil," or "As God wills," and commencing,

"Pain's furnace heat within me quivers," &c.,

was a most appropriate and striking conclusion of such a sermon at such a time. Every one, who knew the pale and sick preacher, could see that the spirit of "these sweet, strong words" had become, more fully than ever before, a part of his own Christian experience. Occasionally there came a few days when he seemed better, and he would say cheerfully, "I feel well to-day; I'll try and not feel too much disappointed if I should get well." But in these seasons of fitful strengthening, he seemed ever to hear the solemn whisper, "Set thine house in order," and, with a seri-

ous but calm dignity, he girded himself to the work. Many sad and weary hours were spent in sifting his library, arranging papers, looking over and burning sermons. What a review! "Whether looking backward or forward," said he, "I find little ground of comfort except as I can commit it all to the Infinite Friend, which I try to do cheerfully and entirely, though the flesh is weak." But there was no faltering in the irksome task until he, for the *last time* turned the key of his desk, — where "in study, meditation, and prayer, God has met me," he said, — when his overtasked sensibilities gave way. "I cannot bear many experiences like this, but it is better to do it now than to leave it for you when I am gone," was his tearful and tender outburst.

A few days later he writes to his brother: —

"I have been burning sermons, — sermons that cost me my life, and have they saved any?"

A walk to the house of a sick friend, in February, led him through the cemetery. Lovingly, almost longingly, he lingered at Mattie's grave.

"Sweet, sweet spot! Sweet, sweet child! I shall not *walk* here many times more, but I shall love at last to lie down by her side."

This was his last benediction upon that little sleeper over whose narrow bed his strong heart had so often broken. Before reaching home his tottering steps told plainly how slight was his own hold of life.

"These poor legs have served me faithfully a long time, but it is evident they cannot carry their burden much longer."

To his friends in the old Vermont home, he wrote, February 4, 1864: —

"Being, as I am now, essentially helpless, I cannot but regard it as a very kind Providence to us that a few, both in the parish and out of it, are so willing and so able to help us along, day by day. As to health, I suppose I must admit a gradual losing ground, and yet it comes on so slowly and so stealthily, that I am hardly aware of it. I feel and appear not very unlike my former self, but am very much weaker, as I find soon on trying to walk off as I did one year ago, or even last fall. I am daily trying every promising method of resistance, but with not overmuch hope, especially as the debilitating months of spring are at our doors."

A few days later, he wrote to the same friends: —

"My chief occupation now is, — struggle with disease, if, by any means, I may keep it in check or where it is. But my courage is often very faint. Not unfrequently it seems hardly worth the while!"

A few days later still he wrote: —

"I continue to creep and prose around, doing nothing daily, except to wear through it with as little friction as possible, — a dreadfully hard sort of life for me!"

With sensibilities intensified by suffering, his enjoyment of music became more exquisite.

"Music," [he said,] "pure sound, without words, without opera-dress or distraction, fills me, overpowers me.

"I shall strain every weak nerve to hear Gottschalk next Monday," [he cheerily writes to a friend]. "By the way, why did not you catch my eye as you looked across Music Hall last Wednesday? I looked as attractive as I possibly could. . . . Indeed, with the scant material I had to work with, I hardly see how any man could do better. Your shadowy friend,

"H."

Among the purest enjoyments of his last winter were the concerts of the Mendelssohn Society, at Music Hall, in Boston. For some time Mr. Hosford went weekly to the city to attend these, and, in turn, took each member of his family. His delight in this style of music always expressed itself in tears, and, in its intensity, seemed akin to pain. "Oh, let me go while I can, for the time that I cannot go is hasting fast," was his ready answer to objections made on the ground of exposure. This hour, nearer even than he thought, he met without one complaint, as he gave to another his unused tickets.

As one by one life's joys were slipping from his weakened grasp, there was at times an effort to detain them, painful to see. Thus, after unusual satisfaction in the services of the sanctuary on nearly the last Sabbath of his attendance at church, he remarked: — "I thought I had given up all thought and all desire for ministerial life, but to-day I have felt an *irrepressible* desire to get well and preach again. I would make so much of the *facts* of the Gospel."

In March Mr. Hosford went to Boston, to bid farewell to friends about to sail for Europe, whose plans for traveling had included both Mr. and Mrs. Hosford, in the hope that a change of climate and scene, under such circumstances, might retard the progress of his disease. Increasing weakness compelled the invalid to decline their invitation, and to see his friends sail without him. Before their return the wearied one had crossed the dark river. How soon he must start on

this passage he doubtless thought as he watched the retreating forms of his friends. But whatever was the inward tumult of this parting, and the final giving up of his life-long desire to go abroad, there was no *visible* sign, save a "clasping of the hands and looking up."

"Others waved their kerchiefs joyfully for you as you swung off from the wharf," [he wrote to these friends,] "but as for me, I felt much more like clasping my hands and looking up. . . .

"I think longingly of you every hour, and still am more content not to be with you than I had supposed possible after having had the offer of accompanying you. It seemed so clearly inexpedient for me to go, that I have had less difficulty in submitting than I should have had had the question been at all doubtful." . . .

To the friends in whose dwelling he found a delightful home when in Boston, he subsequently wrote: —

"My cough since my return has rather a bad way of attentioning me. I evidently took cold the day before I came.

"My memory is laden with pleasant records of my late visit, and it cheers me on my way to believe and know that, if I live, I have not yet seen the last of such things. There are some friends beside the Chief Friend, who we know will love unto the end."

In reference to one of the noble proofs of such enduring friendship, he wrote to his Vermont friends: —

"A strange and trying six months have been these past, but resulting now in a kindness almost as strange. . . . We are just on the verge of moving, (forty rods or so,) and this is an exercise involving more thought and care and labor than you, who have never moved, can conceive of. . . . We shall change quarters probably about the third or fourth week in April. A nice,

clean, snug, four-year old house, with a small and precise garden, facing south and overlooking all this part of the world. Said house is purchased ($4000) by our friends Hale and Nichols, here, and Tyler and Warren, of Boston, and given us to use free as long as myself or Mary live or care to occupy.

"But for this great and unexpected kindness to us, our immediate future would be dark indeed. These friends seem determined that I shall have every facility for recovery which one man can afford another."

To others, to whom he announced the thoughtful kindness of these friends, he wrote, in reference to a season of religious interest, and a wish that had been expressed that he might share in the necessary labor: —

"How sacredly should I work if I could see that God would use me for any good in a revival! But I will work for you and with you, though the method and means be only *prayer*. This is the only weapon God gives me strength to wield to-day. Every thing is best which *the Best* does."

In the glow, and under the influence of the grateful excitement produced by "the lifting" of the overshadowing cloud of uncertainty in regard to his earthly home, Mr. Hosford, in March, seemed decidedly better.

"As to self," [he writes,] "he is very comfortable, having strength equal to the day; *i. e.*, having nothing to do, he has strength to do it."

The last time he went to Boston, which was in the first week of April, he walked to the depot, walked a good deal in the city, selected carpets for the "new house," and attended a concert, and yet, to the surprise of all, returned cheerful and not exhausted, — "not as tired," he said, "as a month ago I would have been

in going down town once." The prospect of a home so pleasant and desirable as the one which his friends had provided, stimulated him, and he went often to the house to suggest little improvements, and pleasantly talk over the arrangements of each room. In the overflow of his cheerfulness he said: — "Perhaps, after all, there is more in store for me than I thought, even in this life. There are many things I would like to do, even with partial health."

But how deceitful and short-lived are hopeful appearances in such a case! Only a few days after the expression of this half-formed and trembling hope, the realization of which he thought to be among the things that were possible, he was awakened in the night by a fresh attack of bleeding, the blood being in quantity more than ever before. And though the bleeding soon subsided, and he was neither alarmed nor excited at the time or subsequently, it became shortly apparent that the attack had left him more feeble than ever, his cough being increased in severity, and his recent increase of strength gone. Thrown back again wholly upon the Almighty arm, he could, however, say with fresh emphasis: —

> "And the mind communed with me that was *his*
> Who said, '*When I am weak then am I strong*,'
> Until the voice of my infirmities
> Made harmony with *that triumphant song*."

The family, fearing the consequences of delay, hurried into the new house on the 29th of April. Our dear, sick brother was on that day *very* sick. But loving hands prepared his room, which was made attractive and homelike; and warm hearts were waiting

to receive him, when, late in the afternoon, his physician and Mrs. Hosford went with him in a close carriage. On entering his room he looked around with pleasure and said, "Did ever a man have such a bird's nest provided for him?"

On the next day, looking from his window upon the charming landscape before him, he said: — "It is a sweet, sweet home, but it cannot be my rest, and I know not how soon I may need the assistance of the same friendly hands to carry me out of it."

He still read or heard read, to some extent, the daily news; but, while he retained his interest in passing events, and, in fact, remained intensely *human* to the last, it was evident that his affections and thoughts were fast becoming allied to the celestial.

The following, from a very brief note written in May, to a friend in Boston, is the last we have from his pen: —

"I am still so weak as to walk but very little about house and garden. Usually ride an hour each pleasant day. It is harder confinement than I have before suffered from the benevolent Father, and in which direction the change may come, namely, sinking or rallying again, we are waiting to see with whatever of trust and composure we can command."

His great work for time was done. He had now only "last things" to do and say, and then wait, with that sound of the coming Eternity in his attentive ear which is so happily expressed in the familiar stanza: —

"A solemn murmur in the soul
Tells of the world to be,
As travelers hear the billows roll,
Before they reach the sea."

CHAPTER XVII.

LAST DAYS.

"And so beside the silent sea
I wait the muffled oar;
No harm from Him can come to me
On ocean or on shore."

WHITTIER.

"This earth has lost its power to drag me downward;
Its spell is gone;
My course is now right upward and right onward,
To yonder throne."

BONAR.

AFTER becoming settled in his new and last earthly home, Mr. Hosford declined rapidly, and his conviction was decided that there now remained little to do but to die. He had been in the new dwelling only a week, when, one morning, he awoke, drew up the sleeve of his night-dress, and, holding out his wasted arm, said to his wife: "No man ever rallied with an arm like that! We have had this matter before us a long time, but it seems as if one never would be *quite* ready. I have been patching up and breaking down, patching up and crowding it a little further into the future; but *now* there can be no more rallying. . . . This is a final summons."

He then began to give directions concerning many practical matters, but soon stopped, exclaiming: "I don't know as it is of any use for me to try to plan for you. Necessity will help you through, when the time comes, better than I can, if not so tenderly."

Not long after this, he awoke one day in tears. "The summons comes a little faster and a little more imperative than I supposed," said he, in response to an inquiring look. "Every morning when I awake, I have to adjust my mind anew to it, in order to feel rightly about it, and toward God, who has appointed it. This is a thing that has to be done over and over."

For a short time he appeared, in some respects, a little more comfortable, and when Mrs. Hosford spoke of his rallying again, he looked pitifully into her face, lighted with a faint ray of hope, and said: "Please don't say any thing about rallying, dear. You may think of it, but please don't speak of it; for, honestly, the thought is not pleasant. If I could get well enough to do any thing, I might desire it; but just to crawl about the house and garden, and be helped by you all, and then sink again, I could not choose it. It is not for me to say how long this conflict shall last, but, if it is the Lord's will, I prefer not to take *one backward step.*"

From this time, his strong desire was to finish his course just as soon as might be consistent with the will of God. And often were his sighs for rest breathed out in some such strain as the following: —

"When shall I be at rest? Hand over hand
I grasp and climb an ever steeper hill,
A rougher path. Oh, that it were Thy will
My tired feet might tread the Promised Land!"

Even when he seemed for a few moments to shrink from some new experience of suffering, his manner of meeting it reminds us of the beautiful chant, in which the question of the faltering child is so promptly and fully met by the response of the faithful father, whose guiding and sustaining hand is safely conducting him on: —

"Is *this* the way, my Father?"
"'T is, my child," &c.

The simple thought that God's love had appointed the suffering, and that a faithful and sympathizing Saviour was with him in every furnace of trial, was ever sufficient to check even the slightest disposition to complain. Once, when he lay panting in one of the terrible fever-fits that now alternated with chills, he said: "These are deep, deep waters," and, seeing his wife at hand, added, "Yes, and none the less so that *the shore is lined with weeping friends.*"

To a friend, who had come from a distance to see him, and was admitted into his room at his sickest hour in the day, he said: "Oh, this is all right. I am held up under it; but it is harder than *you* know, or any one who has not had the experience of it. I am sometimes surprised, that, after all my intercourse with the sick and dying, I really knew so little about it." The friend remarked: "You must live now by faith, — the faith you have preached." "Yes, and *die* by it, too," he replied.

He was keenly alive to the pleasant surroundings of his new house, its quiet and airiness. "Just the place to be sick in," he said. "If this sickness must be, I see not how, in all respects, I could be more pleasantly situated. There is every alleviation the case admits of. Did ever a man have such friends? Yes, God has been marvelously kind, *marvelously* kind, and don't let me in any moment of impatience forget it."

Day after day, with an interest ever fresh, he looked from his windows east, south, and west upon the river, fields, and distant hills. "What will there be in heaven corresponding to my enjoyment of a fine landscape?" he once asked. Trees, especially a large silver-leaved poplar, whose pointed branchlets he described as "living fingers pointing upward," and whose tremulous motion he would imitate with his own thin fingers, greatly interested him. "Oh, the incomparable beauty and freshness of leaves, more charming than flowers; such variety in form, shade, and motion, and all so cooling to look upon, I never tire of them," he said.

A chorus of birds so beguiled his early waking that he "forgot to cough," as he expressed it. "The air is perfectly filled with sound. I never heard it equalled except at Orford." Once, at mid-day, he called attention to the peculiar note of a bird whose habitat he knew to be the dense woods of the country, and which he had never heard elsewhere. "That poor little fellow has strayed from home; listen," said he, and then he imitated the rise and fall of the three notes of the scale which constituted his song. With a warm inter-

est in the lone wanderer, he watched for a renewal of this "plaintive, home-sick song," which, for several days, he was sure to hear. Thus did the leaves and birds of June cheer many a weary hour.

During the earlier part of his sickness Mr. Hosford was accustomed to entertain his wakefulness at night by reading. A book in hand would frequently induce sleep. Sometimes, though rarely, he would permit another to share his wakefulness by reading to him. But, as he grew weaker, it was only in the best hours of the day that he could listen. He still retained his fondness for hymns, and especially now, as ever since his bereavement, for what he called the "Literature of Sorrow," — "those pure, sweet, and pathetic things with which our hymn-books abound, and all our religious literature is sweetened. These have a tender relation to the wants of a bruised soul, and are a part of that rich furniture which God has provided for the sick-room."

The reading of the Memorial of Rev. George B. Little, in many respects a kindred spirit, suggested a conversation in regard to his funeral. It was one of leafy June's perfect days. Mr. Hosford had his chair drawn to the window, and said, as he looked abroad: "These are the days in which Mr. Little was taking his last rides and having the resurrection chapter read to him. Read to me from his Memorial." He interrupted the reading of the account given of Mr. Little's sickness in Paris, by the remark: "*We* never had any thing equal to *that*. I am thankful I

have not suffered myself to be urged away from home for recovery. The cases are very few where it avails any thing."

When the reading was finished he said, "I shall not sink as rapidly as we have thought. Don't you see how long Mr. Little lived and suffered after he was weaker than I now am?"

He then referred to his funeral. "Have it private, *private*," he said, "all the arrangements simple; as little demonstration of word or deed as possible. Bury me from my home."

Subsequently the matter came up again, when he made arrangements in detail, adding, "Now all is settled, and I feel relieved. I have done all I can to help you through it. The Lord must do the rest. It will be a terrible day to you, any way."

Though very feeble, he still manifested a tender concern in all the interests of the household. The children carried to him daily reports of their progress in study, the growth of the trees and garden, of which they were stewards, and often he would watch them at work or play. One of them always remained with him while the other members of the family took their meals. These were pleasant as well as sacred occasions to them. They read to him, usually, selections from Scripture or hymns, and listened to his words of tender counsel. Often, too, there were gleams of the old pleasantry which had been the charm of his intercourse with his children, and which the youngest called "Papa's funniness."

"It distresses me to see how I absorb the attention of the whole house," he once said. "There is nothing else thought of. You must take care of yourselves now, for I am too sick to think much about it."

His extreme delicacy never forsook him in any moment of weakness or suffering, and his love of order, neatness, and tasteful arrangement remained to his very last hour. This rendered him warmly appreciative of every thing done for his comfort.

Of "little Mattie" he still often spoke: "That sweet child! I have great peace in thinking now of her. I shall see her now before any of you."

One day, as one was reading a hymn to him, he said: "After all, *that* is not the thing I want most to hear." Observing a look of surprise on the face of the reader, he added: "You know I have loved it as well as you; but now its very beauty is almost an objection. . . . The soul in the condition of mine does not think or pray in that vein. The cry of my soul is, '*Give me bread or I die.*' I want something positive and direct, and nothing satisfies me but the Saviour's own words, or Paul's or Peter's strong statements of His truth. The very truths under which my faith would almost stagger when I was in health, are the ones I need now; like, 'The Lord shall descend from heaven with a shout,'" &c. After a pause, however, he added: "*Some* hymns which have a great theological truth for a basis are as precious as ever; as Cowper's

'There is a fountain filled with blood,'

especially as it was first written,

'And there *have* I, as vile as he,' &c."

This was, in several respects, an obvious advance upon his previous experience, and, with slight modifications, continued to express his feelings to the last. Bunyan he could always hear read. "There is so little extravagance about it," he would say. To a neighboring minister who, in reference to his apparently sinking condition, remarked, that he might, however, yet linger on the shores of time for weeks or even months, he replied: "No, I am now sinking, never to rise. It is the Divine purpose, and I want to put it on no other basis." "Well," said his friend, "that purpose is surely a righteous one." "Yes," said he, "and my repose on it, for the most part, is *perfect.*" As the brother rose to leave, Mr. Hosford, after violent coughing which seemed almost to strangle him, said, with great difficulty, "Brother, pray for me as a weak, unworthy sinner; give thanks for me as a sinner redeemed and saved by grace!"

More than once, as he noticed his wasting flesh, did the dear sufferer hold up one hand, and, drawing the fingers of the other through the furrows which slow consumption had hollowed out, exclaim: "The *dissolving* of the tabernacle! . . . Oh, what a gate through which to enter heaven!"

A few weeks before his departure, as Mrs. H—— was reading to him an account of the last days of Fowell Buxton, he said: "Beautiful and tender, is it not? But if all that were in *my* heart, I could not say it as he did. How much occasion I have to regret my reticence in regard to my best feelings, especially

my *religious* feelings. I have felt enough, but could not *talk it out*, and this lack has undoubtedly been an obstacle in the way of my professional success. It has grown out of two things; first, a constitutional delicacy; and, second, the fact that I have found *so few* to care for or appreciate my best things. But this failure must be put with all the other mistakes of my life."

Hearing that a remark of his, touching some want of his soul, had been repeated to a friend, he said, after a season of evidently absorbing thought: "I can't tell you how I feel at the idea of having my words repeated." "Why?" he was asked. "Oh," said he, "I don't philosophize upon it, but it gives me a shock something as if I were overheard in secret prayer." Then, after another thoughtful pause, he added: "But it may all be wrong. If any thing I can say now will honor, in any way, the Master, it is due to Him as much as to preach in His name when He gave me strength."

The reading of "Fowell Buxton" was followed by the reading of extracts from the "Memoirs of Rev. John K. Lord," a classmate of Mr. Hosford, who died very suddenly in the midst of his usefulness as a pastor. The soul's exchange of worlds was the subject which chiefly interested him. "I am glad," said he to Mrs. H——, "you are on this track. Let us keep it up. To-morrow get John Humphrey's Memoir, (another Andover classmate). It is not worth while to feel any anxiety about the last struggle. You see,

with whatever diversity, how safely they all get through in the One Name."

A friend, one day, commenced reading to him "John Foster's Letter concerning the Future State." After listening a few minutes, he said: "Please take something else. That *speculation* wearies me. I shall soon know all about it, and can afford to wait."

Turning to another Letter, in which the doctrine of deliverance from condemnation, here and hereafter, is set forth as the most conspicuous character of revelation, proved by such texts as, "The Son of Man came to give his life a ransom for many"; "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law"; "His own self bare our sins," &c., his friend read on, when, with a countenance all aglow, he interrupted the reading by the remark: "Oh, how that lifts up a man! That is positive, — something to take hold of. Turn down a leaf, and recall those texts to me often."

To his dearest friends, who were standing by his bedside and trying to alleviate his sufferings, he said, with difficulty and in detached sentences: "After all, as Foster says, how *solitary* a thing is the fatal process! Your hearts are breaking to help me, but it is I who suffer, I who die! Into this experience you cannot come. None but the divine Son of God, who has tasted even this! You cannot tell what I need, for you have not been here, but He has passed through it all! This is solid comfort, — by faith to lay a drooping head on the bosom of One who has died!"

At one time, when he was apparently so near the

end of his conflict that his life was counted by hours, he noticed a copy of Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress" lying upon the table near him, and, pointing to it, said, faintly, "Let me see the Pilgrims over the River once more." As the book was closed after the reading, he softly said: "Despondency and Much Afraid went over singing, but none could hear the words they said. How beautiful! One of the sweetest things in the book."

Among the last things that he could hear read, was Trench's Sermon on "Christ the Only-Begotten of the Father." He was so deeply interested in it that he subsequently desired to hear it the second time, and remarked, as it was concluded: "How perfectly satisfactory! One of the best uninspired things on that subject. For religious reading, I would be willing to be shut up to that."

His conversation turned often upon subjects suggested by thoughts of the Heavenly Rest, and more and more as the fleshly walls, which shut out the spiritual world from his vision, grew more slight and thin. "Angels," he said, "are as real as earth and heaven, and are a real and active circulating medium between them. They pass up and down as frequently as there are prayers and praises to be borne aloft or messages of help and mercy to be brought down. Could the veil be removed so that we could see spiritual realities, then what a brisk commerce of this kind would be discovered between God and His numerous faithful ones."

It was through Christ typified by the Ladder of

Jacob's vision, which joined earth to heaven, that he saw, as Jacob did, the angels of God ascending and descending on their errands of love. And whenever his thoughts recurred to the vital want of his soul, and especially as the shadows of death gathered more and more thickly around him, his affections concentrated more and more strongly and exclusively upon "*Jesus only.*"

In reply to the question, "Are your ideas of the spiritual economy of the next life more definite as you near it?" he said: "Hardly; there is great *room* for speculation where so little is revealed, but I have a strong feeling that I shall have some post of influence assigned me in regard to you here. I can't tell what or how, but I think it must be permitted the saints still to do something for those they love and leave behind. Perhaps by prayer. Who knows?"

Alluding to the new feature in the sorrow of one whom he was about to leave, that she must bear it apart from his personal presence and expressed sympathy, he said: "Be assured, dearest, I will lift away at it in all the ways possible under that economy where I am."

We have come at length to the confines of the most hallowed scene known to the earthly home, and we need to enter it with hushed breathings and noiseless step, conscious that we are on holy ground. As we approach the sufferer, we hear him faintly saying, —

"Closer and closer my steps
Come to the dark abysm;
Closer death to my lips
Presses the awful chrism.

"Father, perfect my trust;
Strengthen the might of my faith;
Let me feel as I should, while I stand
On the rock of the shore of death."

There had been, for some time, so little apparent abatement of strength, that Mr. Hosford began to wonder how "the silver cord" was to be "loosed." "It seems," said he, "as if I must cough a long time yet to reduce this strength." But when, at length, there were indications of diarrhea, he at once understood it, and exclaimed: "Oh, this is the way it is to be done; this is the beginning of the end. Very well! very well!"

Alluding to this form of disease, he, at another time, said: "You know this thing has been my special horror, but it seems as if the Lord designed my humiliation to be complete."

Three days before his death, he said: "You know I have always had a fear, perhaps no more than a *wholesome* fear, that, in the end, my piety may break down. I have not suffered yet as many do. I don't know how I can bear that, but I have been afraid I might say or do something to deny the Master. Grace has upheld me thus far; every step has been paved with a promise. I could ask nothing more to the end."

Again: "I should like a clear death. I hope my mind will not be clouded by medicine. Don't let them give me any thing to affect it, for I should like to resign myself consciously to the Divine Will. . . . I should like to add my dying testimony to the testimony of my life; but, after all, dying is nothing except so

far as it is the *carrying out* of the life. In order to be of any worth, it should be the complement of the life, and consistent with it."

The fourteenth chapter of John, together with those which immediately follow it, had often been read to him, and always listened to with deep and hushed interest. But now, when the reading ceased, he clapsed his hands and slowly repeated, in the most emphatic manner, the words: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

Much of the time of the last few days he lay very quiet from extreme prostration. Once, after he had been long still, he roused himself, and said: "I find myself *looking back* in life, and I see how few things, after all, are essential to happiness, — fewer than I thought as I passed along. The simple pleasures of my boyhood, the brooks, and strawberry-picking, and mother! Oh, how fresh and real they all look to me now! Then, too, some of those scenes of landscape-beauty on which I have gazed! My delight in them was intense, unmixed; there was not an unfilled corner in it. If I were to live, it seems to me I should never care to see one new scene. So with music; about a dozen of the best pieces of Mendelssohn and Beethoven are in my soul. *These* I should love to hear over and over forever. I never care to hear any thing new. . . . So the soul at last comes back to a few things but *perfect*, and *delight in them* is intense. Will it not be so in heaven?"

Two days before his death, as his wife sat by his side, he gave another proof of "the humanity that was in him," by renewing certain suggestions of practical value. "These may seem to you very small matters to speak of *at this hour;*" he added, "but more of your comfort depends on them than you know. I have always delighted to do them for you, but now you will have to do them for yourself, and I wish you to know how."

On the morning of the last day he spent on earth, he roused at daybreak, took a little nourishment, and asked to have the curtain drawn away that he might look out. His eye wandered from the reddening light in the eastern horizon to more neutral colors, and, pointing with his finger, he feebly said, "Grayer tints and more beautiful," and soon sank, or seemed to sink, into a partial unconsciousness.

When, a little later, the children came in, "Isa" bringing his usual offering of morning-glories, which this morning he had arranged on a sheet of white paper, to set off their rich tints by contrast, he did not at first notice the flowers. But in a few minutes his fond eye was seen to rest delighted on each, when, turning to "little Isa" with a most tender smile, he said, — "Good morning, my dear little boy." After recognizing each one then in the room in turn, he again sank into a stupor from which his attendants could not rouse him. For hours they sat by him, bathing his hands and face, moistening his lips, and

sometimes speaking to him words of endearment,* when there was no sign of life but a feeble fluttering of the pulse, which at times was lost to the sense of touch. In the afternoon he moved his lips, when they touched them, and, after a few efforts, he could again swallow. He took iced milk, asked for something he wanted, and soon came back to full consciousness.

The day was intensely hot, and one stood near him with a fan. His position was changed. This induced a coughing-fit, which it was feared would strangle him; but after a little effort, he raised as usual, noticed the character of his expectoration, and commented on the change in its color. Soon, while his attendants were arranging his pillows, he suddenly tossed his arms wildly in a convulsive struggle for breath; his fingers were distended, his chest heaving and purple, and with a most imploring look for help he turned his eye on his wife, and exclaimed, "Oh, this is the agony of dying. Fan, *fan.*"

Supporting him in her arms, his wife said, "Yes, dear, it is! but I trust it will be short, and Jesus will help you through it." "I know it, — I know it," he replied; and when, in her desire to help him, she was about to speak again, he raised his hand, gently touched her cheek, and, with a look as if every thing was in peril, gasped, "Please stop, my dear, and let me get a great thought." After a moment, a smile, such as would adorn an angel's brow, broke over every feature.

* They remembered that he had once told them he thought the dying had sometimes a consciousness which they could not make apparent.

"You have it now?" said Mrs. H——. "Yes, yes!" "What is it?" "*Oh, the light beyond!*" said he. Then, throwing back his head with a sort of exultant motion, he added, — "*I stand in the light of God.*"

Like that bird whose dying song is said to be its sweetest and its best, his words seemed now almost celestial. Strange, that when to the eye of this world, the harp of the human heart seems most shattered and useless, it *then* should give forth its richest melody! As we sometimes listen to the soft strains of the Æolian, while the viewless winds are playing upon its wires, and imagine ourselves to be listening to the song of distant angels, so we listen to the melody of the redeemed human spirit, while, upon its strings shattered for earth, the breezes of heaven, if not the unseen finger of God, are playing, till even the wreck of the mortal utters notes in unison with the raptures of the immortal. It is the believer's song of victory in the night of death.

Our dear brother now had little left to do but to

> "Pass through Glory's morning gate,
> And walk in Paradise."

It was evident that he was "leaning on the Beloved" as he "went up from the wilderness," and we who knew him had no need to ask, "*Who is this?*"

As the children gathered about his bed again, and the youngest, looking upon the transfigured countenance of his dying father, whispered to his mother, — "What makes papa look so lovely?" the father

caught the words and answered, "Because papa loves his little boy so much, and because the blessed Saviour loves him too." "Oh, my dear papa will not be here to share my birthday with me!" sobbed the child. "Dear little boy, how I should love to be with you," was the response, "but I 'll tell Mattie when I get to heaven, and we will talk about it there."

The two boys now at his request came nearer, and, laying a hand on the head of each, he very distinctly gave them his blessing: "May the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob be with you, and bless you; and the blessings of the dear Redeemer follow you forevermore: Amen. Meet me in heaven."

His daughter, standing on the other side of the bed, now bowed her head, while he, commencing with the words "My darling daughter," repeated the same blessing upon her.

He now took leave of the weeping grandmother of the children, bidding her come after him and come quick. Then followed tender farewell words to others around his bed.

While he was thus pressing in at the Golden Gate, his eyes brimming with human tenderness, and yet lighted up with the glories which streamed through the open portals, he said to his wife, — "I can't feel that I shall be very far away from you. I shall keep as near to you as I can."

As there were now indications of another struggle, Mrs. H—— bade the children go out, when, waving his hand, he said, "All go." Then he bowed himself

to the conflict. It was terrible, but from the sufferer it wrung no cry save this, — "The will of the Lord be done, though it is hard to the flesh," and, wrestling yet more mightily with the last enemy, he said again and with still more emphasis, — "*The will of the Lord be done, I say; but it is dreadful for the flesh.*"

When he was in a measure relieved, one said to him, — "God has answered your prayer. You suffer terribly, but you have not denied Him." "He has answered me thus far," said he, "but I am not through yet; let Him answer me to the end."

After this he did not seem very severely to suffer. The bitterest cup had been exhausted. During the next two hours, other friends came at intervals around his bed, to all of whom he addressed fitting and characteristic words. To one who, doubting whether he were still conscious enough to recognize him, said, "Do you know me, Mr. Hosford?" "Know *you?*" he replied, grasping his hand, "Whom should I know if I don't know you? Why, yes, brother J—— R——."

At ten o'clock in the evening, the children came around him for their *last* "good-night," which he gave with difficulty, making an effort to articulate the name of each.

After this farewell interview with the children, he rarely spoke, except in reply to questions, which were very few, no one being willing to break in upon "the holy hush of the room." The smile which, at the first, his attendants recognized as the reflected "light of

God," still rested on his face, as he lay with his eyes quietly fixed upon his dearest earthly friend, and his hand clasped in hers. "All is peaceful," he once whispered. Fearing at one time that he was losing his sight, she said, "Do you see me?" With an expression of surprise he replied, "Just as well as ever I did in my life."

A little later, thinking that he was losing consciousness, she stepped behind him, and placing her hand on his forehead, asked, "Do you know *this?*" "Yes," he responded, "long, — precious and sustaining as it has always been!"

After this he spoke but an occasional word. Retaining his consciousness almost to the last, he gently and sweetly sank into the arms of his Redeemer, till, just before one o'clock on the morning of August 10, 1864, he was, in his own expressive words, "delivered out of life."

"'T is done! 't is done!
Life's weary work is done!
Now the glad spirit leaves the clay,
And treads with wingèd ease,
The bright acclivities
Of heaven's crystalline way!
Joy to thee, blessed one!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

FUNERAL SERVICES.

"The City's shining towers *we* may not see
With our dim earthly vision,
For Death, the silent warden, keeps the key
That opes those gates elysian.

"But sometimes, when adown the western sky
The fiery sunset lingers,
Its golden gates swing inward noiselessly,
Unlocked by unseen fingers.

"And, while they stand a moment half ajar,
Gleams from the inner glory
Stream brightly through the azure vault afar,
And half reveal the story."

N. A. PRIEST.

IN accordance with Mr. Hosford's repeated directions, the funeral was private, and at his own dwelling. Hundreds of his friends would, on their own account, have preferred a more public service; but all felt that the place and the nature of the service which he himself had designated, were in strict keeping with his characteristic modesty, and well-known aversion to publicity and display. Though the number in attendance would have been very largely increased had the service been in the church, numerous friends from abroad, including many of his brethren in the ministry, joined the

gathered and tearful throng of his former parishioners and neighbors, within and around the darkened dwelling.

The exercises were commenced by the reading of selections from the Scriptures, by Rev. T. T. Munger, Mr. Hosford's successor as pastor of the Centre Church. Rev. Dr. Train, now of the Theological Seminary at Newton, but for many years the beloved pastor of the First Baptist Church in Haverhill, followed in an address of most touching tenderness. In giving reminiscences of his long acquaintance with Mr. Hosford, and the warm and unbroken attachment that had ever existed between himself and his now departed brother, as neighbors and Christian pastors laboring side by side, his choked utterance and his whole appearance indicated that the deepest fountains of emotion were stirred. It was a personal affliction, and the tremulous pathos of his voice, together with the tenderness of the occasion in itself, moved all hearts, and made that recently consecrated dwelling, consecrated now so soon to death, a "Bochim."

The exercises at the house were closed by Rev. John Pike, of Rowley. At the cemetery, Rev. S. J. Spalding, of Newburyport, read a part of the Service, never more appropriate, for the "Burial of the Dead," and offered an impressive prayer. A large number of sympathizing friends had gathered around the open grave previous to the arrival of the procession, and the whole scene was one of deep and touching solemnity. As the tearful throng slowly retired, all felt that,

though earth had lost, heaven had gained, one of the purest and best from the Christian brotherhood, and that, even through the open grave, —

"Gleams from the inner glory"

could be seen, which revealed the welcome assurance that our brother was thenceforth to be

"Forever with the Lord."

CHAPTER XIX.

THE SLEEPING PLACE.

"Dear, beauteous death, the jewel of the just,
Shining nowhere but in the dark;
What mysteries do lie beyond thy dust,
Could man outlook that mark!
He that hath found some fledged bird's nest may know,
At first sight, if the bird be flown;
But what fair field or grove he sings in now,
That is to him unknown.

"And yet as angels, in some brighter dreams,
Call to the soul when man doth sleep,
So some strange thoughts transcend our wonted themes,
And into glory peep.
If a star were confined into a tomb,
Her captive flame must needs burn there;
But when the hand that locked her up, gave room,
She 'd shine through all the sphere."

H. VAUGHAN.

"THE sleeping place" of our dear brother is a beautiful spot, selected by himself as the burial place of "little Mattie." Though in the midst of the "city of the dead," it is quite retired, on the southern slope of an embowered hill, from which there is a charming view of the Merrimac, and the

"Sweet fields beyond the swelling flood,"

which, with their "living green," and their background of more distant hills, furnish just such a landscape as

the sleeper there was never in his life weary of seeing. His strong love of Nature is apparent even in his choice of a grave.

The "lot" contains as yet only two graves, each having a plain and simple, but appropriate monumental stone. The inscriptions, which, in both cases, are brief, and in marked keeping with Mr. Hosford's character and taste, are as follows: —

"LITTLE MATTIE:
THE LORD GAVE HER NOVEMBER 12, 1854.
THE LORD TOOK HER AWAY
MARCH 13, 1862.
BLESSED BE THE NAME OF THE LORD."

"BENJAMIN FRANKLIN HOSFORD,
FOR TWENTY-TWO YEARS A
MINISTER OF CHRIST,
BORN NOVEMBER 11, 1817; DIED AUGUST 10, 1864.
'I KNOW IN WHOM I HAVE BELIEVED.'"

Here must the precious dust be left, "asleep in Jesus," to await the morning of the resurrection. Here, bidding our brother, who shall rise again, a short farewell, we may appropriately close this part of our Memorial with the sweet lines of one of the sons of Haverhill, "the Poet of our Valley," in remembrance of Joseph Sturge: —

"His faith and works, like streams that intermingle,
In the same channel ran:
The crystal clearness of an eye kept single
Shamed all the frauds of man.

"The very gentlest of all human natures
He joined to courage strong,

And love outreaching unto all God's creatures,
With sturdy hate of wrong.

"Tender as woman ; manliness and meekness
In him were so allied,
That they who judged him by his strength or weakness,
Saw but a single side.

"And now he rests : his greatness and his sweetness
No more shall seem at strife ;
And Death has moulded into calm completeness
The statue of his life.

"Where the dews glisten and the song-birds warble,
His dust to dust is laid,
In Nature's keeping, with no pomp of marble,
To shame his modest head.

"And round his grave are quietude and beauty,
And the sweet heaven above, —
The fitting symbols of a life of duty
Transfigured into love !"

CHAPTER XX.

LETTERS OF CONDOLENCE AND REMINISCENCES OF FRIENDS.

"O friend ! O brother ! not in vain
Thy life so calm and true,
The silver dropping of the rain,
The fall of summer dew !

"How many burdened hearts have prayed
Their lives like thine might be !
But more shall pray henceforth for aid
To lay them down like thee."

WHITTIER.

IT would have been easy by solicitation to secure a large number of communications from friends for this part of our Memorial. But with only two or three exceptions which will be apparent, those which will be given were unsolicited, and came as the spontaneous outgush of heartfelt feeling; while those that were solicited are the testimonials of an interest equally genuine and tender.

A brother of Mr. Hosford writes: —

"The *star* of our family is set at mid-day. We can see it no more, though a light, we trust like the Zodiacal, will long remain in the heavens, marking his track, toward which we may look, and be taught and comforted."

"It never seemed so lonely at home as now," [writes

another brother,] "now that the dreadful truth bursts upon us, '*He* will come no more forever!' My poor memory is all I have to comfort me. Henceforth I will grope my way in the world in hope I shall yet be allowed to see him, though the distance between be ever so great. He taught me thus to believe, and gave me the most cheering hopes of a future life. To him more than to all others am I indebted for any love of spiritual things. What he loved to do himself, it was not difficult to make others do, and what I think he wished me to do, it seems most desirable for me to live for."

One of Mr. Hosford's former parishioners writes: —

"I am but one of many who have the greatest occasion for thankfulness at having been under Mr Hosford's ministry so long, — a thankfulness which overflows, even amid grief at his departure, since the very sense of loss shows more plainly what he has done for us. It is hard to realize that he has gone from earth, while the results of his influence are still so fresh and vital, and the whole atmosphere of thought in many minds still vibrates with the impulses of his strong, pure words and deeds.

"I have often felt, and more strongly as the years pass by, that there was nothing worthy in my spiritual life which I could not trace back to him, since through him I first learned to realize the beauty and glory of a life that aims at harmony with the spirit of Christ.

"It is pleasant, with all its sadness, to think of him now as having entered into that glory, of which, even upon earth, he seemed to have so much brighter and more vivid glimpses than others. It seems almost as if the bliss of heaven must have to him a peculiar intensity and fullness, from the fineness and susceptibility of his nature."

The following is from a parishioner, near neighbor, and intimate friend of Mr. Hosford: —

"I knew Mr. Hosford better than almost any one outside of

my own family. He was the dear trusted friend of my early manhood, the true, faithful guide in all the great interests of a spiritual nature, for nearly twenty years. I loved and respected him more than almost any man I ever knew, and his memory is like the fragrance of flowers, or visions of angelic beings. He was without guile, — honest, truthful, sincere, *genuine*. Only those who are compelled to come in contact with the selfishness and dishonesty of large numbers of men in their daily business intercourse, could fully appreciate such a character."

Another parishioner of Mr. Hosford, and long his physician, writes: —

"I thank God that I knew Mr. Hosford so well, and for the influence of his life upon me and mine. And I am deeply grateful that I had *such* a friend, and that I was permitted to sustain the most delicate and tender relations to him for so many eventful years. . . . . .

. . . . . .

"Among the many tender and delightful interviews I had with him, I remember two that were very touching. On a quiet summer afternoon of a Sabbath, I was with him alone. He conversed freely upon the wonderful working of God's plan, and expressed a desire to see things in some degree as God sees them. 'I had marked out,' said he, 'a work for the next five years, for which I thought myself specially adapted. But God does not need that work, and how mortifying to my ambition to think I am so little needed in carrying on His great plan. But perhaps His cause will be best promoted by this very experience through which I pass; and no doubt the work of grace will be more effectually accomplished in my own poor heart. How wise are all His plans!'

"I referred to what God had already permitted him to do, and to the influence of his life and teachings. 'I don't know how I have done it,' he replied, 'Oh it is wonderful how God works through this poor weak flesh. . . . . The efforts that

the world have praised most are to me the most mortifying. I can see now what I might do in the future by profiting by my mistakes in the past. How *unsatisfying* is the desire to be a *literary* minister. A minister has gained power over himself when he can sift out of his sermons every thing except what ought to be there, and preach the gospel *in its simplicity, and for the sake of preaching that alone!*'

"The other occasion referred to was in a summer twilight. The day had been hot, and he was restless on his sick-bed. I commenced repeating the hymn, 'Alone with God.' He listened quietly, and, when I had finished, he remained silent, and I supposed had fallen asleep; but soon, in his impressive manner, repeated the line, —

'Give rest, *Thy* rest, of rest the *best*.'

"He desired me to repeat some other sweet hymn, and I recited the beautiful lines, 'Nearer Home':

'One sweetly solemn thought
Comes to me o'er and o'er;
I 'm nearer home to-day
Than I 've ever been before.'

"When I had finished, he exclaimed, 'How sweet! repeat it again.' Thus we passed the most solemn hour that I ever experienced.

"We took a stroll into the wood about a mile from home, one afternoon during the last autumn that he spent on earth. It was the perfection of Indian summer, when

'Sweet, calm days in golden haze
Melt down the amber sky.'

"He talked freely of the beauty of the scenes that were constantly presented to our view. 'No war here,' he exclaimed, 'all is calm and peaceful.' — 'Too near to God for doubt or fear.' — 'They share the eternal calm.' — 'How many of God's beautiful works are lost upon man because he will not *observe*. How he rushes on irrespective of the wealth of beauty all around him. He seeks for something satisfying far away, when the elements are lying profusely about his home. How bountiful is God in all His gifts to man!'

"During the winter that he spent in the country while endeavoring to regain his health, I was in frequent correspondence with him. His letters were always cheerful and hopeful, and expressive of an earnest desire to be restored to the work he loved so well among the dear people of his charge. A few extracts will show the spirit he manifested under this great affliction: 'Dear youths — how I shall wish to see them, and labor lovingly with them personally, and how hard it will be for me to hear the Master say, "Your help is no longer needed as aforetime." In some respects this is harder than it would have been to have dropped from among them forever as by a sudden death. But grace is schooling me to it, loosening my hold inch by inch, and almost imperceptibly to myself, strengthening me gradually for a burden which at first would have crushed me at once.' Again, while we were enjoying an interesting revival during this absence, he wrote: 'And *I*, ah me! I am silenced and paralyzed at this critical hour. I can do nothing but sit by and look on, after all the years of my toil and prayer that I might see such a day. But this is clearly the Divine will, and *so* clearly that I can bow to it the more easily.' Again, after a very serious illness from influenza, which greatly prostrated him at a time he had hoped he was gaining, he wrote: 'The cough has left me almost entirely, and I can nibble a little something daily, — about as much as a good house-fly, or a well-to-do mouse consumes.' Again, in the spring following: 'Every thing about us is exceedingly pleasant these spring days. How cheerful the birds and flowers (oh, the superlative beauty of the *wild* flowers!) strive to make "all out-doors," and how the mantle of God's loving care is over all. You get nearer to the source and soul of things in the country than in the city, especially such a busy town as Haverhill.'

"At another time, after a great affliction in my family, of which he wrote most tenderly, he concludes: 'With these sad picturings I entertain my lonely spirit, while I lie sleepless during the night-hours; except where my thoughts take the

form of prayer, and even then perhaps they may do you all no good, but they prove at least how deeply my experience as your minister for so many eventful years, has *scored* you into my mind and heart. But the time is coming and may be very near, when burdens will be rolled off, and heavy thoughts, with saddened remembrances, be blotted out by the full tide of present joys.'

"At another time when some of his dearest friends had decided to make a profession of faith in Christ before the world, he said: 'But glad am I that the Good Shepherd's love to them is not affected by any weakness of his ministry. Take each loved one warmly by the hand *for me*, and welcome them towards Christ's fold. Whom having not seen I love, for the Master's sake, and, for aught I can perceive, love as warmly as I could, had I followed them step by step through the last six months' preparation. The good Lord help them unto the end.' "

The following communication from Rev. George T. Dole, of Stockbridge, Mass., though not received till the Memorial was nearly through the press, is introduced here as a welcome contribution from a classmate of Mr. Hosford during his senior year in the Theological Seminary at Andover: —

. . . . . "There was that about Mr. Hosford which led me at once to mark him, and which soon drew my heart instinctively toward him. But our rooms were not near each other, and months passed away before I became really acquainted with him. Indeed it was not till summer term that there was any intimacy between us; when circumstances led to considerable private and familiar intercourse. He was somewhat reserved, perhaps diffident, and specially reticent, I think, in his religious experiences. My impression of him from the first was that he was a sincere, humble Christian, and a diligent student, faithful and prompt in all prescribed duties, and ever

performing his part creditably, whatever it was. Of his standing as a linguist or theologian, I cannot speak as I might have done, if associated with him earlier in the course. He seldom engaged in debate upon those theological points which were mooted and discussed, sometimes with considerable warmth, among us; though an attentive listener. And I have supposed that his theological ideas were more in a formative state than those of many of his class. He was, I think, one of its younger members. Certainly it was by his literary rather than his theological attainments, that he was then conspicuous. His taste was exquisite, and his criticisms, though always courteous, just and acute. His style was graceful, yet fresh and not without vigor. As a writer, he took rank with our foremost men. But it was evident that he did not regard his education as in any respect finished, or about finished, but would go on learning and growing, and, to use an expression which I once heard him employ respecting another young man, that 'he would not culminate till at least forty years old.'

"His eye was keen, thoughtful, deep, yet with rare humor often visibly lurking in it; and his whole countenance full of vivacity and sensibility. His conversation was never commonplace, and was often enlivened by pleasantry and wit, yet ever chaste. His manners were characterized by gentleness, naturalness, and simplicity.

"In June, 1844, he spent a few days at my house, in Beverly, and preached two excellent sermons, portions of which I distinctly remember. Having remained a resident at the Seminary on the Abbott Foundation, he had now been some two years at large, and was feeling considerably discouraged at not having obtained a settlement, and gave utterance to apprehensions that he had mistaken his calling. That he had such a feeling painfully at times, I have other evidence. And the fact, in view of what he afterwards proved, is quite suggestive.

"After Brother Hosford's ministry commenced at Haverhill, our intercourse was infrequent. Two brief visits I made at his house. Seven years ago last month I spent twenty-four hours

there; and I found him, though matured in intellect, advanced in knowledge, and holding an honored position, the same tasteful, genial man, the same cordial, unaffected friend. A deeper earnestness however in his work, and a profounder spirituality than I had observed in him before, I think, was manifest. One remark of his I remember to this effect: 'If we are ever to do any thing to save the people to whom we preach, *we must do it soon.*' I did not understand the remark to be made, though, from any presentiments of premature death.

"I left him happy in his pleasant family, with that sweet vivacious little Mattie full of glee at his side. That was our last personal interview.

"When I saw it announced in the newspaper that he had been bleeding at the lungs, and was in a very critical situation, I felt moved (having myself been laid aside by hemorrhage in 1851,) to write to him such words of encouragement as my own experience afforded. To this he soon sent the following reply: —

"'Brother and Friend, — Your note of Christian sympathy touched me tenderly; and also strengthened me. I am happy to acknowledge it with my own hand, and to be able to do it without exhaustion. The newspaper, as usual, exaggerated somewhat. I bled not enough to prostrate me; but doctors and friends prostrated me, lest I should by action or speech bleed more. I am at present very comfortable, — without pain, and not much weakened except by being kept so still. I am advised and commanded to persevere resolutely in this quietude and passivity, giving physical nature ample time and opportunity to heal; being as free as possible from effort, weariness and care. Can you from your own successful experience, add any suggestion of practical value?

"'I trust the admonition will not be lost upon me, whether living and labor, or suspension of labor and dying be the result. Were *I* the only person concerned in the matter, I should make a much less vigorous opposition to the disease

than I now do. Wife and children, — they fill up the way between me and death, so that I hardly know how I can get over! Yet our Gracious Redeemer-Friend has lifted many a timid, loving mortal clear over this difficulty; and thus will He do with me, *if I am His.* I remain your brother and friend, HOSFORD.' "

Rev. L. H. Adams, of Manchester, N. H., writes: —

"As to Brother Hosford's characteristics, what *can I say?* Pleasant, genial, (I won't say '*witty*' as the word is so vilified in common usage) keen, often brilliant, and all these pervaded by a deep reverence and care for others' feelings, made him a most rare and delightful friend. His modesty was equalled only by his genius; for he was *more* than 'gifted,' or 'talented,' and yet so unique was that genius, that I am at a loss where to class it. Not a theologian, logician, orator, or poet, by his confession, yet an intimate acquaintance showed Brother Hosford to be familiar, in the best sense of the word, with all the fairest fields of these different departments of intellectual and literary life. As a Christian, he had evidently tasted of the 'deep things' of God, and could not tolerate a superficial, careless experience, but truly seemed to be 'nourished up in the word of faith and of good doctrine whereunto he had attained.'

"This personal experience led him to set up a high standard of ministerial excellence, and wherein he thought he fell short, no one was quicker to discern or severer to condemn than himself."

Dr. W. W. Morland, of Boston, writes to Mrs. Hosford: —

. . . . . "When I think of your husband, it is with *this* thought more than any, I believe, that he is *at rest.* Not that he did not enjoy, even to the last, all that was to him so enjoyable, — your own companionship and that of his children, together with the society of many whom he valued, — but then,

for the last year, I conclude, much of existence was only a fruitless and wearying struggle against relentless disease; and worn-out nature must at last have been even *glad* to lay down her arms.

"I have often thought of my last interview with your husband. How much he seemed, although so ill, to appreciate the beauty of your surrounding landscape! I particularly recall his enthusiastic account of the *robin concert* renewed every morning.

"While you must experience a sense of deprivation and loneliness, you cannot be without comfort, even under the impression of such pleasant earthly memories. But, in a higher and more enduring consolation, I am well aware, is your chief support. 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.' I love to think of those whom I have most valued on earth, and who have 'gone before,' in the spirit of the exquisite hymn, with which you are doubtless familiar, —

'Who are these in bright array,' &c.

"With sincere sympathy and regard, I remain,

"Yours, very truly."

Rev. C. E. Fisher, of Lawrence, writes: —

"We mourn with you under the great bereavement that has, at length, come upon you; not that our dear brother has entered into rest, and into the glory of the blessed Jesus whom he loved, — but with you, in your desolation. We knew and loved Brother Hosford, and we mourn that we shall see his face no more. Your own united life, so tender and beautiful, is interrupted in its earthly experiences, to be developed in new and deepening spirituality, and satisfying oneness with Christ. God will open to you, in this furnace of affliction, new manifestations of Himself, such as He gives only to those that mourn, and they shall be comforted of God. Brother Hosford had the elements of mind and heart that would have made him increasingly useful at home and abroad, in his ripened life, had he been blessed with health. But none know so well

as you, dear sister, how he has labored, striven, and borne up against his oppressing and depressing disease, which has now set him free to walk with angels, and to behold the glory of God, and find, in His presence and love, perfect and uninterrupted life. Rejoice in his gain and our Father's will and pleasure, and seek in Him the consolation which alone can satisfy."

Rev. D. Butler, Secretary of the Massachusetts Bible Society, writes: —

"Few are called to experience a grief like yours, for God has given to few such a friend as formed and graced your home. With a nature originally of the finest mould, refined by culture and sanctified by grace, his presence was a continual joy. I never left your home after my casual visits, without feeling that I had enjoyed the society of one who was in the closest sympathy with all that is true, and pure, and beautiful. Like all others favored with his acquaintance, I respected him, I esteemed him, I thanked God for him. I was grateful for the blessings that surrounded him, for the happiness he caused and the happiness he felt, in his home, and in his study, and among the flock which he tended so faithfully and lovingly to the last.

"His removal from the world where he was accomplishing so much in the maturity of his powers, is a mystery which here we may not penetrate. And yet, if we estimate one's life by what he has enjoyed and accomplished, he has lived long, far longer than the period usually allotted to man. His life has not been a failure, nor did it terminate till the richest harvests were gathered."

The following is an extract from a letter addressed to Mrs. Hosford, by one of Mr. Hosford's ministerial neighbors: —

"An acquaintance of ten years with Brother Hosford has endeared him to me as but few men have ever been endeared

to me. He was indeed a rare man, and a still rarer minister of Jesus Christ. As a Christian, as a theologian, as a writer, as a preacher, and as a friend in all relations, I can hardly resist the promptings of my heart to record my admiration of him. Never can I cease to remember him with the deepest and tenderest interest, and no small part of my joy in the anticipation of 'the rest of our Father's house,' gathers around the humble hope that his 'mansion' and mine may be side by side, as our parishes have been on earth. It would greatly oppress my heart to feel that my acquaintance with him has ended, and that I have seen him for the last time. The last time that I did see him, I wanted, as I left him, and felt that we probably should meet no more on earth, to remind him that 'Christians *never* see each other for the last time.' This thought, though I found myself too full of emotion to express it then, has again and again recurred to and comforted me as, in imagination, I have had his pale face and emaciated form before me: 'Dear brother, we shall see each other again. We need not utter our farewells. All the sweetest and richest of our acquaintance as Christians *is to come*.'

"I doubt not, my afflicted sister, that you, as his nearest and dearest earthly friend, are comforted and sustained by *his* Saviour, and the gospel he preached. Your family circle has been invaded by death before, but it was only to hallow and make more sacred all its links and ties, broken and unbroken. And now not only your home, but your dwelling, so recently dedicated, is hallowed by a double sacredness. But though no dwelling is fully dedicated, as an earthly home, till it is consecrated by death, the event that has now consecrated yours invests it with far more of light than of shade. Only let Christian faith perform its appropriate office of bringing the distant near, and rendering the unseen visible, and I can safely predict that it will now be dearer than ever, — a home 'quite on the verge of heaven,' through whose open portals your beloved husband has almost visibly passed from his chamber of sickness and suffering to his mansion of rest and glory.

'Dear, beauteous death; the jewel of the just!
Shining nowhere but in the dark;
What mysteries do lie beyond thy dust,
Could man outlook that mark!'"

Prof. W. G. T. Shedd, of New York, writes: —

"My dear Mrs. Hosford, — It is not that my words, or any human words, can abate the sharpness of your grief that I send these brief lines, but only to express my deep sympathy with you and your children in this hour. What you have lost, none can so truly tell as your own heart, with all its memories of twenty-five years of intimate companionship. What his friends and the church have lost, they will know more and more, as in the light of his completed life, and of the tomb, they scan his rare traits and virtues, — and especially as they painfully see that the world has perishing need of such spirits as his, and finds but a very few of them in each generation for its guides and instructors. Among all the men in Eastern Massachusetts with whom I came in contact, (and it was my lot to come in contact with many men of many minds,) there was not one whose death could touch me at so deep a point as his. But I must not follow this train of feeling. He is

. . . . . 'gone into the world of light,
And we alone sit lingering here!'

. . . . . "That our gracious God and Saviour will make His truths and promises very clear and comforting to your mind, is both my fervent prayer and confident belief; 'for He is *faithful* that promised.'"

Subsequent to the date of the foregoing letter, Prof. Shedd furnished, by request, the following communication, to the accuracy of whose delineation all who knew Mr. Hosford will most heartily assent: —

"For me to attempt to give my recollections of Mr. Hosford within the limits of a letter, is as difficult a task as I can undertake. I should not like to attempt it even in the space of a volume. And this, not because his life was a stirring one,

or that my acquaintance with him was long continued. He led the quiet life of a pastor, and my acquaintance with him did not begin until we had both reached manhood. The difficulty arises from the rare fineness and subtlety of his excellences. He belonged to that very small class of mortals whose clay is porcelain. I shall therefore content myself with that rapid and brief utterance of respect and affection which implies more than it expresses.

"The constituent elements in Mr. Hosford's nature seem to me to have been a union of delicacy and energy. He was instinctively refined, and as instinctively intense and forceful. Had the former quality not been balanced by the latter, he would have exhibited all the traits of those who waste life in the vague worship of beauty, and bring nothing to pass. I never knew a person more sincerely alive to beauty, both in Nature and in Art, than he. He had the tastes of a naturalist, and often, in my rambles with him, have I been struck with the quickness and justice of his observations upon physical features. He had the eye of a painter, and responded, not in any affectation, but with blood-felt delight, to hues, and forms, and outlines of scenery. For the world of sound he had not only a natural but a scientific ear. Music was a passion with him, and Lydian airs immediately lapped him in Elysium. This æsthetic tendency pervaded his entire organization, and threw over all that he did or said the atmosphere of refinement.

"But this dangerous trait was tempered and restrained by energy. I never knew a more positive man than he was. His sympathies were strong and his antipathies very strong. He was not forward to express what he felt upon disputed questions in church and state, but in the recesses of his intellect there never was any apathy towards what he thought to be truth, and what he thought to be error. He felt vividly and oftentimes painfully. A conservative, as is every highly cultivated man, I have often witnessed the recoil of his well-educated and just understanding from the crude notions and

methods of charlatans and declaimers; and sometimes I have listened to the cool and vitriolic sarcasm in which he gave expression to his intense aversion. This innate energy braced and fortified his refinement, and preserved him from an effeminacy which would otherwise have been the characteristic of so gentle, sensitive, and retiring a nature as his.

"Of course these do not exhaust the characteristics of Mr. Hosford's mind; but I think they constituted its groundwork, and I seem to find their presence and influence in all that he thought and did. They showed themselves in his intellectual productions and in the general tone of his thinking. This would be a fertile theme, — for Mr. Hosford was marked by a singularly fresh and graceful style, — but I must content myself with a brief notice of his religious character, as it exhibited the two traits that have been alluded to.

"There was a rare spirituality and sincerity in his way of contemplating religious things. He feared hypocrisy above all, and no mortal was more free from cant. Consequently, whenever he spoke upon the solemn subject of religion, I always felt that I was hearing one who did not run in advance of his convictions. Though a playful humor often suffused his thoughts, and a swift glancing wit flashed out of them, he uniformly dwelt in a serious and elevated region. I doubt whether any one can recall a frivolous remark from his lips. Though far from all pretense and prudery, he was a man of true Christian dignity, and never for a moment lost sight of the 'good behavior' or decorum which St. Paul requires in the Christian bishop. I always thought him a model in this respect.

"The prayers of a Christian man, when he is in a praying mood, reveal his inward nature and traits more than any other mental productions. Those of Mr. Hosford were oftentimes strangely searching and intensely supplicatory. When under the strong impression of eternal realities, his petitions reached a sphere that was wholly unearthly. I remember, and shall always remember, a prayer which he offered beside the open

grave of the late Dr. Dimmick. We had followed his remains, as a clerical association, to their last resting-place in the cemetery, and with us were the weeping kindred, the weeping parishioners, and the saddened townsmen. Mr. Hosford was called to give voice to the reflections and emotions of the hour. His own mind had been deeply smitten by the very sudden death of a most respected and beloved father in Christ; and there rose from his burdened but confidently believing soul such a supplication as lifted, and strengthened, and comforted us all. Once again, in the privacy of his own home, and under the anguish of a bereavement that seemed to tear away a part of his own heart, I heard him offer a prayer that was awful for its spirituality, its resignation, and its rooted trust in God.

"But I must not dwell longer upon the theme. . . . . My recollections of Mr. Hosford are very tender and high. Since he has gone into the world of light, the refinement and spirituality of his mind and heart have become still more ethereal to my vision, and I almost feel as if I had no right to speak of him or about him. Tied to the body of this death, and unnerved in this conflict with sin and vile affections, how shall we dare to intrude into that redeemed and holy circle, —

> 'Where freed souls dwell by living fountains,
> On everlasting, spicy mountains.'

"But it is a cheering thought that he was what he was by the grace of God in Christ; and that all Christ's people shall one day wear the same 'image of the heavenly.'"

In the "Contributions to the Ecclesiastical History of Essex County," published since Mr. Hosford's death, Rev. L. Withington, D. D., of Newbury, has given a very kind and just notice of Mr. Hosford, but, as it is brief and not intended to be complete, he has kindly consented to furnish the following additional notice, which, though touching upon the same points as the

other notice, will be found to be mainly different, and a fitting tribute from the oldest surviving member save one of the "Essex North Association," of which Mr. Hosford was a member from October 29, 1845, until his death: —

"My recollections of Brother Hosford are all pleasant. His early death has given a mournful interest to his calm and consistent life. He strikes me like one of our vernal suns, casting its setting beams on a tranquil and waveless sheet of water. He left us in the midst of his usefulness, and his faculties never shone brighter than at the last. I cannot aim to give an artistic and finished picture. I shall describe him as he impressed me from several years' recollection. His talents were proportionate, clear, bright, — the endowments of Nature joined to the most diligent and commendable cultivation. He inclined more to the logical than to the imaginary, and could always give a reason for the faith that was in him. He was more of a reasoner than a poet; and yet I believe he sometimes wrote poetry. I have always understood that the satirical verses, '*Wanted, — A Minister*,' were written by him. He was accustomed to write in the religious papers, and there was a vein of sober wit, always well pointed, which commanded attention and gave poignancy to his reproofs. His preaching was instructive rather than emotional, and the longer you heard him, the more you were pleased with his performance. His sermons appeared to me to run like a transparent stream, clear to the bottom, fertilizing the moral soil over which they flowed, and as the object of them was to do good, so that was their constant effect.

"His character was as transparent as his style. He had no foldings, no disguises, but every word seemed to come from his heart. He was a sincere Christian; and his aim seemed to be to exemplify in his own life all that he taught to others.

"As to his theology, I always supposed it was tinctured by the school in which he was taught. He was born in Thetford,

Vt., where Dr. Burton* was for a long time a successful preacher. Dr. Burton's theology was based on the taste-scheme, (so called), and I have always understood it to be a recession back to the old form of Calvinism; that is, tracing all incidental sins to an evil principle inherited from the original transgression. It is true the terminology is somewhat different, but it revives, and was intended to revive, an old idea. At any rate, such seemed to be its effect in our brother's mind, in which some *seemingly* diverse qualities were blended in the finest harmony. Direct, without being rough; sincere, and yet not offensive; reverencing the old formulas, and yet willing to improve. His compound was, in the language of another, 'like rivulets issuing from distant springs, each impregnated in its course with various mixtures, and tinged by infusions unknown to the others, yet at last easily uniting into one stream, and purifying themselves by the gentle effervescence of contrary qualities.' He had the harmony of the gospel-spirit. Yours truly,

"LEONARD WITHINGTON."

The following notice, read by the Secretary of the Alumni at the Anniversary of the Theological Seminary at Andover, in 1865, may appropriately close these reminiscences: —

"Mr. Hosford was a man of more than ordinary ability. He was a careful observer, and an independent thinker. He had deep but intelligent convictions, and great tenacity in adhering to them. As a preacher, he sought the instruction and edification of his hearers, rather than any merely popular effect. He never courted novelties in the pulpit, but was satisfied to present plain Bible truths. These truths, however, were often presented by him in remarkably fresh and original forms. He had a great dislike of shams, and could expose them with a keen sarcasm. He was a diligent student of the

* Dr. Burton, however, died when Mr. Hosford was young.

Bible and of science; especially of those theories in science which affect the interpretation of the Bible. He was a man of refined tastes, a lover of whatever was beautiful in Nature and Art. He had an intelligent and exquisite enjoyment of the finest compositions in music. His excellences in general were substantial rather than showy. He was such a man as might have been expected, had his life been spared, to exercise a fifty years' pastorate in one place and in one pulpit. But He who holds the stars in His right hand, saw fit to remove him, at his meridian, to a higher and brighter firma ment."

THE END.

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